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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 35th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

Draft resolution and draft decision on implementation of section II of the annex to General Assembly resolution 32/197 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system (A/C.2/45/L.3 and L.29)

1. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco), Vice-Chairman, introduced draft decision A/C.2/45/L.29, based on the informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.3, and recommended it for adoption by consensus.

2. Draft decision A/C.2/45/L.29 was adopted.

3. Mr. PERUGINI (Italy), speaking in explanation of vote on behalf of the member States of the European Community, said that the Community expected the report of the Secretary-General on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system to be a full and comprehensive document. The issue of the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council should be considered in the wider context of that restructuring.

Draft resolution on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/C.2/45/L.12)

4. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco), Vice-Chairman, said that it had not been possible to reach a consensus during informal consultations on draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.12.

5. A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.12.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining: None.

6. Draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.12 was adopted by 125 votes to 2.

7. Mr. TENNEY (Israel), speaking in explanation of vote, said that the sole purpose of the resolution that had just been adopted was to express political and ideological support for the theses and objectives of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the standard-bearer of extremism and fanaticism in the Arab world, both with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict and also to other issues, as could be seen from the recent events in the Gulf.

8. It was distressing to see that, over the years, the resolution had become a sort of ritual imposed on the United Nations, with no basis in logic.

9. The adoption of the resolution, which his delegation deeply deplored, was certainly not a matter for pride on the part of those who dreamed that the United Nations would one day play an objective, pragmatic and constructive role in world affairs. Such resolutions did not contribute to the peace process for which Israel had been striving ever since its creation. It was superfluous to point out yet again that, until that peace was secured, Israel remained the sole authority responsible under international law for the administration and the destiny of the inhabitants of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip.

10. Israel's policy had always been to secure and increase the economic and social well-being of its inhabitants, and to co-operate with all those willing to support it in that matter. However, it must be clearly understood that, until such time as a peaceful settlement had been achieved, any attempt to deny it that right, recognized under international law, would be futile. The resolution was barren, harmful and totally unacceptable, and his delegation utterly rejected it.

11. Mr. DUGAN (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country supported, and was the largest source of, humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, through UNRWA, UNDP and private voluntary organizations. In 1990, it had disbursed $57 million to UNRWA alone, an organization whose sole purpose was to provide education, housing, health programmes and other facilities for Palestinian refugees. The United States also had an active aid programme in the territories. Through its Food and Peace Programme, it had also made available basic food commodities for 96,000 recipients. The resolution did not accurately reflect the situation, and had impractical ideas on addressing the problems and his delegation had therefore voted against it. The resolution's call for assistance to the Palestinian people through "close co-operation" with the PLO was unacceptable to the United States. As formulated, it made no practical contribution towards solving the problems it purported to describe. The United States would prefer consideration of practical, workable ways to increase investment, employment, production and income in the occupied territories.

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12. Mr. PERUGINI (Italy), speaking in explanation of vote on behalf of the member States of the European Community, said that, although they supported the resolution, they wished to stress that, in the fifth preambular paragraph, they understood the resolution to refer to the economy in the occupied Palestine territories. The Community was providing substantial humanitarian and economic assistance to the Palestinian people through various means. With regard to paragraph 4, Community assistance would continue to be channelled through the appropriate organs, in co-operation with the competent institutions. That assistance included food aid as well as the financing of projects for the benefit of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and elsewhere, through the competent organs of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations.

13. With regard to trade, the European Community had adopted autonomous tariff arrangements, including duty-free access for industrial products and preferential treatment for certain agricultural products. It had accepted the Chambers of Commerce in the West Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza Strip as authorities qualified to issue certificates of origin and to ensure the necessary administrative co-operation. It had repeatedly stressed to the Israeli authorities the importance it attached to the effective implementation of its trade measures without administrative or other obstacles to Palestinian exports. The European Community interpreted paragraph 9 as concerning the establishment in the occupied territories of a network of local banks.

14. The Twelve would continue to grant their aid and development co-operation, both bilaterally and through the Community, as well as through the competent organs of the United Nations system in order to respond to the needs of the Palestinian people.

15. Ms. HJELT af TROLLE (Sweden), speaking in explanation of vote, said that her country fully supported efforts to secure an improvement in the conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and elsewhere. That support took the form of humanitarian assistance, and the Swedish Imports Promotion Office for Products from Developing Countries also encouraged imports of Palestinian products. Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the draft resolution, however, gave rise to formal and technical problems that were at present being studied.

16. Mr. KRAMER (Canada), speaking in explanation of vote, said that while his delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.12, it had reservations about the language used in the fifth preambular paragraph and some of the operative paragraphs. Canada did not recognize "Palestine" as proclaimed in Algiers, as it did not meet internationally recognized criteria for statehood.

17. Mr. LUFTI (Jordan), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution because it believed in the justice of the cause of the Palestinian people and its right to establish an independent State on Palestinian soil under the leadership of its sole legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization. His delegation's understanding of paragraph 4 was that any assistance to the Palestinian people in the territories of the Kingdom of Jordan should be fulfilled with the permission and agreement of the Government

(Mr. Lufti, Jordan)

of Jordan. The Government of Jordan would not share sovereignty over the territory. His delegation's understanding of paragraphs 5 and 6 was based on the fact that the treatment on a transit basis of non-Jordanian commodities bound for a third party and the concessions and facilities granted by the Jordanian Government should be fulfilled through bilateral agreements between the exporting State and the Jordanian Government, bearing in mind that, ever since the start of the occupation, Jordan had made all necessary concessions and granted all necessary facilities to assist exports from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Jordan would continue to assist the Palestinian people so as to put an end to the Israeli occupation and achieve a lasting peace through a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question.

18. Mr. FJAERTOFT (Norway), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country had voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.12 on the understanding that paragraph 4 did not impair or restrict in any way Norway's ability to provide assistance to the Palestinian people through channels of its choice, inter alia, non-governmental organizations.

19. Mr. KAARIA (Finland), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had expressed its concerns regarding exports from and imports to the occupied territories and the relevant certificates of origin on earlier occasions. Had there been a separate vote on paragraphs 5 and 6, his delegation would have abstained.

20. Mr. GIANELLI (Uruguay), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation broadly concurred with the content and the humanitarian aims of draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.12. However, it would have liked to see greater balance reflected in the text, so as to contribute to dialogue and negotiation between the parties in the region.

21. Mr. BOECK (Austria), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.12 and wished to reiterate, with regard to paragraph 6, the comments it had made the previous year during the adoption of the resolution on the same subject. He was also pleased to inform the Committee that the occupied Palestinian territories had been included in a list annexed to the Austrian Code on Preferential Customs Treatment.

22. Mr. BABINGTON (Australia), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution because it supported efforts to assist the economic development of the Palestinian people. The Australian Government provided aid funds expressly for that purpose. However, his delegation had difficulty with the reference in paragraph 6 to Palestinian certificates of origin. His Government accepted certificates of origin only if they were issued by competent State authorities. In the present circumstances, it could not therefore recognize certificates of origin issued by Palestinian Chambers of Commerce. His Government had made it clear that the question of a Palestinian State would arise only in the context of an overall peace settlement. However, it had long supported the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence, including, if they chose, an independent State.

23. Mr. STADTHAGEN (Nicaragua), Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea), Mr. LIMON (Suriname) and Mr. AL-SULAITI (Qatar) said that, had they been present during the vote, they would have voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.12.

24. Mr. FYFE (New Zealand), speaking in explanation of vote, said that the provisions of the draft resolution were generally in accordance with New Zealand policy regarding provision of assistance to the Palestinian people by the United Nations. However, his delegation had reservations regarding some paragraphs of the draft resolution, including the fifth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 9.

25. Mr. MANSOUR (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) thanked all those delegations who had voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.12. The Palestinian people saw the adoption of the draft resolution as an expression of international support and solidarity with their struggle to put an end to the Israeli occupation and to attain their national rights to return to their homes and properties, to exercise self-determination, and to achieve full sovereignty over the State of Palestine on its national soil, after the withdrawal of the Israeli authorities, army and settlers, from the occupied Palestinian territories including Jerusalem.

26. The Israeli occupation was the source of all his people's political, economic and social problems. Around 55 per cent of Palestinian land had been confiscated, its water resources stolen, its industry and commerce devastated. Large numbers of women and children had been drafted into Israel's cheap labour market, and the education system had been reduced to a shambles. The massacre of Palestinians in Jerusalem on 8 October 1990, involving hundreds of casualties, was only the latest example of Israel's brutality. Since the start of the intifadah three years previously, more than 1,000 Palestinians had been killed, more than 20 per cent of them children under the age of 15; 100,000 had been injured and another 100,000 had been imprisoned.

27. In his explanation of vote, the representative of Israel had shed some crocodile tears on the subject of peace. The leaders of the Palestinian people were committed to peace and were ready to negotiate immediately with their enemies, with Israel, in an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation, on an equal footing, of all parties concerned, including the PLO and the permanent members of the Security Council. Only the previous year, 151 countries had voted in favour of convening such a peace conference, with only Israel and the United States opposing it. Israel was the real obstacle to peace in the region.

Draft resolution on assistance for the reconstruction and development of the Republic of Yemen (A/C.2/45/L.9/Rev.1)

28. Mr. GIANELLI (Uruguay), Vice Chairman, said that in operative paragraph 2 the words "on special programmes of economic assistance" should be added after the word "report". He recommended the text to the Committee for adoption by consensus.

29. Draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.9/Rev.1, as orally amended, was adopted.

30. Mr. MISSARY (Yemen) expressed thanks and appreciation to the Committee for its adoption of the draft resolution.

31. Mr. GEBREMEDHIN (Ethiopia) and Mr. GUERRERO (Philippines) said that they would have liked to join in sponsoring the draft resolution.

Draft resolution on special economic assistance to Chad (A/C.2/45/L.10/Rev.1)

32. Mr. GIANELLI (Uruguay), Vice-Chairman, pointed out that the Philippines, the Sudan and Suriname had joined the list of sponsors and he drew the Committee's attention to operative paragraph 4; the word "Paris" should be replaced by "second United Nations". He recommended the text for adoption by consensus.

33. Draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.10/Rev.1, as orally amended, was adopted.

34. Mr. DOUTOM (Chad) expressed the gratitude of Chad to the entire international community which for more than a decade had contributed to the reconstruction and development of Chad.

Draft resolution on assistance to Mozambique (A/C.2/45/L.18/Rev.1)

35. The CHAIRMAN announced that Australia had withdrawn from the list of sponsors.

36. Mr. GIANELLI (Uruguay), Vice-Chairman, announced that the Philippines and Zimbabwe had joined the sponsors, and he recommended the draft resolution for adoption by consensus.

37. Draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.18/Rev.1 was adopted.

38. Mr. ZANDAMELA (Mozambique) thanked all delegations that had worked closely on the project, and expressed the readiness of his Government to work with the donor countries, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations in the task of economic recovery of Mozambique.

Draft resolution on emergency assistance to Somalia (A/C.2/45/L.20)

39. Mr. GIANELLI (Uruguay), Vice-Chairman, announced that Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guinea-Bissau, Jordan, Maldives, Mozambique, Myanmar, Peru, the Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Singapore and Suriname had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.20 and pointed out that the first preambular paragraph should be deleted. He recommended the draft resolution for adoption by consensus.

40. Draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.20, as orally revised, was adopted.

41. Ms. HASSAN (Somalia) thanked the Committee and expressed the hope that the draft resolution would respond fully to her country's needs.

AGENDA ITEM 86: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued)

Draft resolution on assistance to Benin, Central African Republic, Ecuador, Madagascar and Vanuatu (A/C.2/45/L.28)

42. Mr. AYALA (Ecuador), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/45/L.28 on behalf of the sponsors, said that it followed on from Assembly resolutions 42/205 and 43/211 which had been adopted for the purpose of putting in motion mechanisms for assisting countries which, in addition to their economic and social problems, had suffered real catastrophes that had put a stop to all development. He drew particular attention to paragraphs 4 and 6.

43. A number of corrections should be made to the text. The third preambular paragraph should read as follows: "Deeply concerned at the seriousness of the economic and financial crisis faced by these countries, which is intensified by the catastrophic effects of natural disasters". The footnote on the first page should simply refer to document A/45/358, and the ninth preambular paragraph and paragraph 6 of the French text should be aligned with the English text.

44. The sponsors expressed the hope that the draft resolution would receive unanimous support.

AGENDA ITEM 84: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/45/3, A/45/76-E/1990/12 and Add.1, A/45/77-E/1990/10 and Add.1, A/45/584, A/45/598-S/21854, A/45/648; A/44/646)

(a) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (continued) (A/45/273-E/1990/85 and Corr.1 and Add.1-5, A/45/281-E/1990/66 and Corr.1)

(b) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (continued) (A/45/347; E/1990/29)

(c) UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (continued) (A/45/529; E/1990/29; DP/1990/44)

(d) UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (continued) (A/45/3; E/1990/28)

(e) WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (continued) (A/45/3; E/1990/99)

45. Mr. ZIELINSKI (Poland) said that the positive change in the political climate and the growing credibility of the United Nations happily coincided with what the report A/45/273 called "adjustments and innovations in operational activities", a process which had started with the adoption of resolution 44/211 and was scheduled for completion in 1992. It had already brought about many discussions and decisions by intergovernmental and inter-agency bodies, and the question was how to translate them into concerted action by all participants.

(Mr. Zielinski, Poland)

46. In response to that challenge, Poland had substantially increased its pledges to UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA for 1991. He expressed his delegation's appreciation for the understanding shown by the Administrator of UNDP in view of Poland's tremendous technical co-operation needs as the country endeavoured to stabilize its economy and create a new economic system. Poland's efforts to achieve a parliamentary democracy and a market economy were interconnected, and the transition was a difficult one, entailing heavy social costs. However, he was confident that multilateral technical co-operation would make that transition smoother; once it was completed, Poland would be in a better position to extend international economic co-operation to other countries.

47. In fact, Poland had been providing assistance to developing countries in the form of seminars, training courses and expert and consultant services. A successful international seminar on privatization had recently been held in Warsaw and another one, on entrepreneurship, was scheduled to take place with UNDP assistance in December. His delegation looked forward to sharing Poland's experience in the area of economic and social reforms with all interested countries and the United Nations system.

48. Given the important role that operational activities would play in meeting the development challenges of the coming decade, the efficiency, transparency, accountability, effective management and cost-effectiveness of the United Nations system must be increased. In that connection, former United Nations experts and staff members from recipient countries could be very useful in the design and implementation of projects in their own countries. They would be able to develop programmes which took into account the specific situations of their countries. Such arrangements were particularly significant in view of the increased emphasis placed on national execution and the adoption of a programme approach to technical co-operation.

49. The growing demand for multilateral technical co-operation would require increased contributions in the form of financial resources and technical assistance. Third-party cost-sharing would have to be utilized to a greater extent than before, requiring greater involvement on the part of Governments and the governing bodies and administrations of the specialized agencies. The role of field offices and the co-ordination of their activities were of particular importance in that regard.

50. Non-IPF countries should play a greater role in inter-country and regional projects, in view of the relative reduction of regional IPFs in overall programme resources for the fifth cycle. The five regional programmes should preserve their distinct features and separate IPF allocations. Given the dramatic changes taking place in that region, the regional programme for Europe should broaden multilateral technical co-operation in traditional areas and in new areas, such as the transition of Central and Eastern European economies to market-oriented systems. Special attention should be given to those countries in the allocation of Special Programme Resources for the fifth cycle.

(Mr. Zielinski, Poland)

51. He commended the efforts of the Director-General to comply with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/211 and expressed support for the revised implementation schedule set out in the Director-General's report (A/45/273/Add.5). He looked forward to the findings of the independent study on ways to improve the co-ordination of the United Nations system at the country level and expressed confidence that the programme on management of field co-ordination for senior representatives of the United Nations system would enhance the effectiveness of operational activities. He supported most of the Director-General's recommendations regarding the implementation of resolution 44/211.

52. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco) reaffirmed his delegation's commitment to the principles underlying the multilateral assistance provided by the United Nations system. Development assistance was not intended to perpetuate the dependence of recipient countries, but to lead to self-sustained development. While the United Nations system should bear international guidelines and strategies in mind when programming operational activities, national policies and plans provided the most appropriate frame of reference for those activities. Operational activities must be given adequate financial support and be organized effectively.

53. The resources allocated for operational activities each year accounted for only 12-15 per cent of official development assistance because donors preferred bilateral channels in which aid was often tied, limiting the economic independence of beneficiary countries. In fact, the growing gap between needs and available resources continued to be a source of concern. Consequently, donor countries should make a genuine effort to increase their contributions to operational activities in real terms on a continuing, predictable and assured basis.

54. With regard to the organization of operational activities, the routine utilization of national expertise and technical co-operation among developing countries would have a multiplier effect where the dissemination of technical skills in recipient countries was concerned. His delegation therefore welcomed decision 90/26 of the UNDP Governing Council, on agency support costs, because it made provision for financial support for national execution and, unlike the existing arrangements, distinguished between administrative support and technical support. He wondered, however, why the Council should have decided to appropriate 2 per cent of programmable resources for centrally financed services when they might better have been included under national IPFs (decision 90/26, para. 10).

55. General Assembly resolution 44/211 had emphasized the need for a shift from a project approach to a programme approach and had urged that all relevant governing bodies should develop more programme-oriented mechanisms for the provision of technical co-operation. The programme approach concept must be clearly defined and major modifications should be made to the rules and procedures governing operational activities with a view to simplifying them and striking a judicious balance between the decision-making bodies and the field offices so that decisions concerning project management could be completely decentralized. The programme approach must be viewed as a sectoral development strategy that would facilitate the integration of all types of development assistance. Simplification of

(Mr. Amaziane, Morocco)

procedures should significantly reduce the documentation required for project approval. Follow-up reports should be submitted at one-year intervals, and a single format should be adopted for reports from the various organizations of the United Nations system. Likewise, procurement procedures should be adapted to those of recipient countries in order to reduce costs.

56. In general, decentralization meant allowing country offices to take decisions regarding all aspects of project management; accordingly, it would require the strengthening of the technical and staffing capacities of the field offices. The wide range of procedures followed by the organizations of the system and bilateral donors exacted a heavy toll on recipient Governments in terms of cost. Consequently, a joint review of those procedures, involving representatives of beneficiary countries, should be conducted to make them coherent and flexible for end users.

57. There had been little progress in the implementation of resolution 44/211 during the past year. Those organizations which had responded to the requests set out in the text had limited themselves to welcoming the resolution and expressing their readiness to support its provisions. Eight organizations had yet to consider the resolution officially. His delegation therefore hoped that those bodies would do so as soon as possible and carry out the measures called for in that text.

58. His delegation was concerned at the responses of some organizations cited in the Director-General's report (A/45/273 and Add.5) which gave the impression that the developing countries were not ready to assume their responsibilites where operational activities were concerned and that, because the resolution was so complex, implementation could only be carried out selectively and gradually. His delegation believed that the resolution's provisions were interdependent; failing to implement some of them would have an adverse effect on the implementation of the resolution as a whole. Moreover, some of the responses and questions were merely indicative of bureaucratic resistance to change. Paragraph 10 of document A/45/273/Add.5 stated that present constraints on the regular budgets of some agencies meant that implementation of the resolution must proceed selectively. His delegation believed that such selectivity should not be exercised at the expense of recipient countries, who wished to have decisions concerning project management taken by field offices. The national programme framework referred to in paragraph 17 of the resolution should be established solely by recipient countries on the basis of national development plans, priorities and objectives. He questioned the advisability of allowing the United Nations to design both the national programme framework and the integrated support system, which might infringe on the prerogatives of beneficiary countries by encouraging them to determine their co-operation needs in terms of satisfying United Nations organizations.

59. Finally, he wished to know why the report said that opportunities for expanding the use of national execution were contingent upon local factors as a recipient Government's desire to take on new responsibilities, since the use of

(Mr. Amaziane, Morocco)

such arrangements was not directly linked to level of economic development. Countries which were interested in employing such arrangements needed to have the obstacles thereto removed.

60. Given the uncertain state of the world economy caused by the crisis in the Gulf, which had led to rising energy bills for countries like his own, he could only deplore the fact that Morocco's IPF for the fifth programming cycle had been reduced by 10 per cent while the figure for the Arab regional programme had been reduced by 40 per cent. In allocating resources for that programme, consideration must be given to the fact that the regional integration process currently in progress (the establishment of the Arab Maghreb Union) required adequate financial support.

61. He concluded by expressing support for the recommendations of the Director-General contained in paragraphs 154-206 of his report.

62. Mr. HASSAN (Pakistan) said that, although his delegation was concerned about the availability of resources for operational activities, it was heartened to note that pledges for UNDP core funding had increased by 7 per cent at the recent United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities. The need for a significant, continuous, predictable and real increase in resources for operational activities could not be overemphasized.

63. The principle of strict adherence to the policies and priorities of recipient Governments had been recognized by all major funding agencies and the donor community, a principle which the Director-General had also stressed in his statement. Yet in reality, project implementation and preparation tended to deviate from that principle, as funding and executing agencies promoted projects and programmes which they considered useful from their own viewpoint. That practice must be eliminated.

64. While his delegation attached great importance to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/211, the report of the Director-General unfortunately conveyed the impression that that task was a complicated and time-consuming one. Moreover, the governing bodies of a number of agencies had yet to meet to consider the resolution. The adoption of that resolution had been the culmination of years of effort to improve the efficiency of the United Nations system and consequently demanded a more positive response.

65. He endorsed the resolution's emphasis on a programme, rather than a project, approach. Under the project approach, funds were allocated even when it was obvious that a recipient country's economic situation would prevent the Government from meeting its counterpart and recurrent cost obligations. Unless external assistance organizations jointly funded well-conceived and technically sound national strategies, development assistance would amount to nothing more than a succession of ill-assorted projects. The programme approach made it possible to co-ordinate and integrate various forms of assistance into a coherent government programme.

(Mr. Hassan, Pakistan)

66. The development of a programme approach called for a harmonization of the programming cycles of the funding agencies of the United Nations system and the adaptation of those cycles to the planning periods of national Governments. There should be no delay in implementing that provision, for most developing countries were fully prepared to harmonize their own programmes with those of bodies providing external assistance.

67. The rapidly evolving technical capabilities of the developing world and the advantages of technical co-operation among developing countries had not led to a greater use of that arrangement in the project execution activities of the United Nations system, which tended to transfer technologies from the developed countries rather than employ solutions available in the countries of the South. Emphasis should be placed on the utilization of indigenous, technical manpower and local expertise. Furthermore, the effectiveness of technical assistance depended not only on the way it was used but also on the way it was administered. Such assistance was often undermined by the complex and diverse procedures required by different external assistance organizations. The decentralization of decision-making was essential if programme implementation was to be swift, high-quality and relevant to local realities. When alien management techniques were imposed, such assistance sometimes acted as an obstacle to development. Decentralization would thus permit the use of innovative techniques that worked in a particular culture.

68. His delegation strongly supported the objective of national project execution and hoped that UNDP resident representatives would be allowed to approve projects above the newly-set limit of $700,000. They should also be authorized to approve nationally executed projects.

69. Mr. CAMARA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that, since its founding over 40 years earlier, FAO had been a major contributor to the operational activities of the United Nations system. FAO had already demonstrated its keen interest in General Assembly resolution 44/211, through its regular and substantive contributions to the work of the Office of the Director-General for International Economic Co-operation and its full participation in the useful activities of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operations activities) (CCSQ (OPS)) in such key areas as the improved role of resident co-ordinators, enhanced national programming and increased technical and operational support through projects and programmes at the country level. In that important process, the extensive practical experience of agencies such as FAO in field operations should be fully reflected. That would require a true spirit of co-operation among the organizations involved, and between those organizations - individually and collectively - and the Office of the Director-General for International Economic Co-operation. The resolution would be debated at the forthcoming ninety-eighth session of the FAO Council in Rome later in the month.

70. In order to implement the changes and improvements advocated by General Assembly resolution 44/211, it would be important to have in place the appropriate mechanisms and financial arrangements. The framework decision on support costs taken by the Governing Council of UNDP was intended to strengthen the tripartite

(Mr. Camara, FAO)

partnership in the technical co-operation of the United Nations system, enhance the national role in project execution and reinforce agency substantive and technical support to projects. The decision called for an extensive consultation process between UNDP and the agencies concerned, and for joint work in identifying and analysing parameters and procedures so that a final decision could be taken by the Governing Council in June 1991. Over the past three months, FAO had worked very closely with its agency partners in seeking to elaborate the various measures identified in the framework decision. However, more had to be done if that consultative process was to be concluded successfully.

71. The World Food Programme (WFP) had been conceived and established jointly by the United Nations and FAO. That joint action and responsibility reflected the perception of States Members of the United Nations and of FAO that food aid, whether provided as an outlet for the utilization of surplus stocks or as a component of development assistance, had to be managed in the context of general economic and social development - the mandate of the United Nations - and that of nutrition, food production and distribution - the mandate of FAO. The provision of food aid also called for co-operation with other United Nations agencies and appropriate intergovernmental bodies.

72. The future modalities for the most effective use of WFP, and the Programme's continuing close relations with its parent organizations were currently being discussed in a sub-committee of the WFP Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes. The sub-committee's recommendations regarding proposals put forward by Member States, and the executive heads of WFP, FAO and the United Nations would be considered by the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes at its forthcoming session.

73. Ms. EHRENREICH (Denmark) said that her Government fully associated itself with the statement on operational activities for development which had been made by the representative of Norway on behalf of the Nordic countries. As the host country for the next meeting of WFC in June 1991, Denmark hoped that the work of the Second Committee would contribute to further progress in operational activities related to food questions.

74. Mr. ZHANG Guanghui (China) said that the ultimate goal of multilateral technical co-operation was to assist the developing countries in their efforts to promote economic development and self-reliance. When formulating country programmes, the relevant United Nations organizations and bodies providing assistance should take account of recipient countries' national development plans, policies and priorities.

75. China had paid much attention to the integrated and co-ordinated use of United Nations multilateral and technical assistance at the country level. With respect to programming, China had always designated ministries and departments whose field of competence corresponded to the mandates and characteristics of the bodies and organizations of the United Nations system involved in formulating and managing country programmes. At the country level, recipient Governments should assume full

(Mr. Zhang Guanghui, China)

responsibility for overall co-ordination of all assistance provided by the various bodies and organizations of the United Nations system. The resident co-ordinators should work closely with the responsible authorities of recipient Governments in implementing and managing programmes in order to achieve the objectives of the programmes.

76. Over the past four decades, the United Nations Development Programme had provided large amounts of technical assistance to more than 100 developing countries and regions and had established good relations of co-operation with them. China hoped that UNDP would adhere to its principles concerning universality, neutrality, fairness and the grant nature of its assistance, particularly when adopting guidelines and policies for assistance. At the same time, China hoped that the developed countries would adopt a positive attitude towards the economic rehabilitation and development of the developing countries and make appropriate contributions in that regard.

77. The practice of the past few years had proved that the modality of national execution in the implementation of assistance projects contributed positively to the enhancement of recipient countries' capabilities for self-reliance. In order to promote and further expand national execution, the relevant organizations and agencies of the United Nations development system should organize various kinds of training courses for the management personnel of recipient Governments in order to familiarize them with procedures and regulations and to improve their operational and management skills.

78. In its resolution 1989/91, the Economic and Social Council had decided, in principle, to convene in 1994 an international meeting on population for a comprehensive appraisal and review of the implementation of the World Population Plan of Action. The meeting would facilitate the formulation, on the basis of the principle of mutual respect for sovereignty, of national population policies and development strategies in the light of the actual conditions prevailing in each country, for the benefit of their economic and social development. The Chinese Government supported the convening of the meeting and was prepared to contribute to it.

79. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) should be commended for its successful World Summit for Children. The Summit had outlined guidelines for the directions and objectives of UNICEF in its future work and had laid the foundation for the further promotion of the cause of children throughout the world. His delegation hoped that UNICEF would make the necessary arrangements to implement all co-operation programmes, as required by the Plan of Action of the Summit.

80. As the largest agency which provided free food aid within the United Nations system, the World Food Programme (WFP) played an important role. In view of the fact that WFP had been jointly established by the United Nations and FAO, its co-operation with those two organizations should be further strengthened. The general rules should be revised on the basis of full respect for the interests of developing countries in order to enhance the efficiency of WFP. Without full

(Mr. Zhang Guanghui, China)

representation, the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes would not become a genuine intergovernmental organization which effectively reflected the interests of Member States. The future status and mandates of that Committee should be considered in conjunction with the change of its composition.

81. The question of emergency food relief was closely linked to the food and agricultural situation as well as to the food security of recipient countries. The current approval system with regard to emergency relief had proved to be effective, and China believed that it should be maintained. At the same time, in order to increase efficiency, a deadline should be set for the Director-General of FAO to make decisions after receiving the proposals of the Executive Director of WFP.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

82. The CHAIRMAN announced that a number of delegations wished to join in sponsoring draft resolutions which the Committee would consider. The draft resolutions and respective sponsors were A/C.2/45/L.16 (agenda item 86 (b) - Brazil, Cyprus, Morocco and Tunisia; A/C.2/45/L.25 (agenda item 12) - Bulgaria, Luxembourg and Turkey; and A/C.2/45/L.27 (agenda item 12) - Honduras, Ireland and New Zealand.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
36th meeting
held on
Thursday, 8 November 1990
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 36th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 84: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/45/3, chap. V, sect. A, A/45/707, A/45/636, A/45/205, A/45/207, A/45/216, A/45/222, A/45/227, A/45/230, A/45/264, A/45/265, A/45/266, A/45/267, A/45/269, A/45/270, A/45/272, A/45/280, A/44/668, annex)

(a) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (continued) (A/45/273 and Corr.1 and Add.1-5-E/1990/85 and Corr.1 and Add.1-5, A/45/281 and Corr.1-E/1990/66 and Corr.1)

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(e) WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (continued) (A/45/3; E/1990/99)

General discussion (continued)

1. Mr. EGOROV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the documents recently adopted by the United Nations in the field of international economic co-operation, such as the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation, the new international development strategy and the Programme of Action adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, would guide the discussion, since what was now needed was to determine ways of implementing their provisions, especially in regard to operational activities.

2. The discussion would be based principally on resolution 44/211 concerning the comprehensive triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, which constituted a real turning-point and must be implemented. The report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation on operational activities for development (A/45/273 and Add.1-5) provided a sound basis for discussion in that regard.

3. In February 1990, the Byelorussian SSR had been obliged to appeal to the international community and the United Nations for assistance in dealing with the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, because of the extreme gravity of the situation. Byelorussia, which was experiencing a time of crisis because of the difficulties of making a transition to a market economy, could not cope with that unprecedented task on its own. The Chernobyl area had therefore been declared a disaster zone and given special status. The appeal for international assistance had given rise to Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/50 and the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report on the activities of the United Nations system relating to the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant (A/45/643).

(Mr. Egorov, Byelorussian SSR)

4. The accomplishment of that task would depend on the effective functioning of the various United Nations bodies concerned with development assistance, especially the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which played a key role in financing and co-ordinating operational activities. At its thirty-seventh session, the UNDP Governing Council had adopted a number of very important decisions, including a decision on the fifth programming cycle (90/34). In that connection, the establishment of supplementary criteria enabled the range of countries receiving assistance from UNDP to be widened; provision was made, for instance, for countries suffering from ecological disabilities and whose economy was in transition. The decision to keep back $100 million out of the total amount of resources allocated to country indicative planning figures to meet the requirements of future participants in the Programme, thus giving it greater flexibility, was particularly important. His delegation proposed that the report of the UNDP Governing Council (E/1990/29) should be adopted.

5. It was deeply symbolic that the opening of the current session, which heralded a new decade, had coincided with an unprecedented event, the World Summit for Children, which had concluded with the adoption of a World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. The relevant Plan of Action was of particular interest to Byelorussia, for it stressed that children who were victims of man-made disasters, including nuclear accidents, and all children living in especially difficult circumstances should receive special attention at the national level and assistance from the world community. That was an expression of international solidarity with the populations of Byelorussia, Ukraine and Russia, and particularly with the children who had suffered from the terrible Chernobyl tragedy. The United Nations system was actively engaged in assisting the disaster-stricken population, and it was hoped that UNICEF, in accordance with its mandate, would play a leading role in co-ordinating assistance provided by the system to the children of Chernobyl. His delegation proposed that the report of the Fund's Executive Board (E/1990/28) should be adopted.

6. Mr. FYFE (New Zealand) referred to General Assembly resolution 44/211, which provided comprehensive guidance on how to improve the functioning of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system. Improvements were in fact needed in the quality of assistance and in its quantity, as well as in co-ordination, and the implementation of the resolution could contribute to such improvements. The progress reports prepared by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation were very useful, but it was regrettable that the document containing the revised implementation schedule called for in Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/82 had been issued so belatedly.

7. There had been good progress in 1990 in the implementation of resolution 44/211 by the United Nations system, especially by UNDP, whose Governing Council had adopted significant decisions at its thirty-seventh session, especially decisions 90/21 on national execution of projects, 90/26 on agency support costs and 90/34 on the fifth programming cycle. In connection with the latter, his delegation was gratified by the attention paid to the special needs of island developing countries and by the revision of the weight coefficients in favour of

(Mr. Fyfe, New Zealand)

low-income developing countries. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that those provisions did not jeopardize the universality of the Programme.

8. New Zealand would be following closely the allocation of resources to programmes financed from Special Programme Resources, particularly to the disaster mitigation activities of special importance to the cyclone-prone South Pacific, which would be determined at the Governing Council's special session in February 1991. With regard to the round-table meetings organized for aid co-ordination, it would be preferable for them to be held in the region rather than in Europe. Among the new "thematic" activities, those relating to environmental management development should be strengthened. Lastly, New Zealand would increase its annual contribution to UNDP by some 16 per cent, since it continued to regard the Programme as the central funding mechanism of the system's technical co-operation activities.

9. Mr. BARAC (Romania) said that multilateral technical co-operation had for a long time contributed actively to the development of developing countries. Its main characteristics were universality, neutrality and flexibility. His Government greatly appreciated operational activities for development and would continue to extend its full support to all relevant United Nations organs.

10. At the same time, there was a need for adjustments to the rules and procedures governing those activities. The landmark General Assembly resolution 44/211 outlined a system in which recipient countries would have the main responsibility for needs assessment, programming and co-ordination of technical assistance. Such assistance should respond to countries' priorities and enable them to build up their capacities; it must be integrated into the national development process and draw more widely on the resources and expertise of recipient countries.

11. Romania was satisfied with its co-operation with the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, but felt that the Department's activities could be improved. The proportion of experts and consultants from developing countries recruited by the Department had decreased from 33.4 per cent in 1985 to 31 per cent in 1989, including only two Romanian experts out of a total of 1,518. That trend was negative and he hoped that the Department would take corrective measures and recruit more specialists from developing countries.

12. Romania was making efforts to strengthen its already excellent co-operation with UNDP. The recent visit to Bucharest by the UNDP Administrator, to make an on-site assessment of Romania's assistance needs during its transition to a market economy, was sure to have positive results. In 1991, Romania intended to organize a round table on the role of UNDP in solving the most serious problems facing developing countries.

13. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) played a vital role in the incorporation of population factors into development planning and in the implementation of population policies. Much work remained to be done, however, on the relationship between population, environment and development and the need to

(Mr. Barac, Romania)

achieve a balance between those three factors in order to ensure the survival of mankind. Romania's co-operation with UNFPA had expanded significantly since the revolution, as evidenced by a project recently approved by UNFPA for assistance with the 1991 Romanian population census.

14. The World Summit for Children had highlighted the very important role played by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Romania was deeply grateful to the Fund for the support which it had provided and hoped that UNICEF would continue to assist it during the current difficult period, when Romania was having to deal with the complex and distressing problem of abandoned children, a sad legacy of the totalitarian régime.

15. Mr. KONN (Cameroon) welcomed the efficiency with which the various organs and agencies of the United Nations responsible for the operational activities of the system were performing their task and commended them for their response to the real needs of developing countries.

16. The new development strategy gave the United Nations system an important responsibility in the most underprivileged countries, where its actions would have to be focused on the struggle against absolute poverty. The Director-General's report on operational activities (A/45/273 and Add.1-5) adopted a constructive approach to that question. His recommendations aimed at enhancing national capacities and promoting the training of national experts were also very useful.

17. His delegation endorsed the principle whereby recipient Governments should assume overall responsibility for the management of projects, set forth in UNDP Governing Council decision 90/21 and examined in detail in the Director-General's report, in the context of the application of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/211, since it was likely to promote national self-reliance.

18. The administrative and financial aspect of operational activities merited particularly close attention and UNDP must continue to play a central role in funding those activities in order to avoid the dissipation of resources. The co-ordination and coherence within the system were being strengthened at all levels. It was therefore essential to strengthen the role of resident co-ordinators in order to ensure the integration of the system's sectoral inputs, and it was reassuring that the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) had made recommendations aimed at redefining their responsibilities. Much ground still remained to be covered, but it was to be hoped that, with the political will of recipient countries, the targeted results could be attained.

19. It was essential that there should be sufficient contributions to operational activities for development if the system was to continue to respond effectively to the steadily growing needs of developing countries, which, for their own part, had no hesitation in allocating a considerable share of their resources to UNDP. The difficulties currently faced by Cameroon had prevented it from sharing the cost of UNDP projects and it hoped that UNDP would take that situation into account.

(Mr. Konn, Cameroon)

20. For many years, UNICEF had been carrying out highly commendable work to benefit needy children and making tireless efforts in the fields of health, food, education and the environment. Despite the considerable progress achieved, however, the situation of millions of children in the developing countries who lacked access to basic health services and to education remained a source of extreme concern.

21. The task of improving the situation of the world's children was closely tied to the promotion of a new international economic order which would give all people an equal chance of achieving prosperity. That task was mainly the responsibility of the Governments concerned, but their efforts were being thwarted by a hostile world economic climate, bereft of justice and solidarity. The adoption by the General Assembly of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which had been signed by the great majority of Member States, marked a major step forward, but it should be seen as only the beginning of a permanent and sustained programme of action in favour of children.

22. Mrs. DUEÑAS de WHIST (Ecuador) said that the Committee's debate on the question of poverty had highlighted the appalling stagnation in the social sphere, suggesting that operational activities for development were the proper United Nations instrument for combating underdevelopment.

23. The current year had been rich in negotiations and concerted action, evidence of the world community's desire for consensus. In that connection, she drew attention to the Declaration adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, the new international development strategy, the Paris Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the World Summit for Children.

24. Earlier statements on operational activities for development provoked reflection on the exact meaning of those activities, on the results achieved, experience gained and mistakes made in that area and, above all, on the task now facing the international community.

25. An examination of the essential nature of development showed that development "with a human face" was synonymous with the elimination of absolute poverty, and its starting point should therefore be to re-establish the dignity of the human person. Dignity meant housing, education, food, health and work. All those aspects of development should be addressed by simultaneous, complementary and coherent action. Development should be a comprehensive process, not limited to partial assistance or sectoral action. She endorsed the views of the Director of the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank that development should be redefined as a frontal attack on all the scourges of the modern world, namely, malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, unemployment, social inequality, etc. Measured in terms of overall growth rates, activities for development had been a success, but measured against the yardstick of employment, education, health, housing, justice or the elimination of poverty, they had been a dismal failure, achieving limited success in only a few sectors.

(Mrs. Dueñas de Whist, Ecuador)

26. During the first United Nations Development Decade, numerous theories of economic development had been advanced, leading to a wide range of programmes and activities of the United Nations system. The lesson to be drawn for the future was that development must be conducted in an integrated, co-ordinated and orderly manner if it was to solve, even partially, problems which currently seemed insoluble.

27. Things which, only a short time previously, had seemed politically impossible were now actually happening. There was therefore every reason to hope that the collective will of the international community, combined with the operational capacity of the United Nations system, would make it possible to conduct a programme of action for development which would result in the final eradication of poverty. The United Nations system and the various specialized agencies had a historic responsibility in that area.

28. Mr. LIMON (Suriname) commended the Director-General on his report on the operational activities of the United Nations system (A/45/273/Add.2). The success or effectiveness of operational activities for development depended on the degree of involvement of the recipient country in the planning and execution of those activities.

29. For that reason, recipient Governments should continue to have sole responsibility for the co-ordination of external assistance and principal responsibility for its design and management. If a recipient Government encountered difficulties, the United Nations system should, if so requested, respond fully to the needs of the Government concerned in order to ensure that programmes were properly executed.

30. Serious consideration was currently being given to the possibility of shifting the approach to operational activities from projects to programmes. His delegation approved that move, provided that it was in harmony with the development policy of the recipient country, did not encroach on its responsibilities, and facilitated better utilization of its national capacities.

31. The report of the UNDP Governing Council (DP/1990/18) dealt with activities undertaken to strengthen national capacities. UNDP was still endeavouring to strengthen such capacities in the developing countries in order that they should become self-reliant in management, administration and research and in the formulation and implementation of development plans and policies. His delegation acknowledged the importance of the UNDP contribution in that area and was pleased to learn that it was committed to continue its activities along the same lines.

32. It noted with satisfaction that the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions had already begun to study ways of improving the role and effectiveness of the resident co-ordinator system. If the United Nations operational system was to become more responsive to the needs of the developing countries, an effort must be made to synchronize the programming cycles. His delegation therefore welcomed the recent initiatives of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy, particularly with

(Mr. Limon, Suriname)

respect to the extension of the terms of reference of field representatives to authorize them to determine, in conjunction with the host Governments, whether there was a need to synchronize programming cycles with their respective development plans and the extent to which synchronization was possible.

33. The Declaration adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly and the new development strategy had already stressed the importance of the human dimension of development. Indeed, operational activities for development could be effective only if they improved people's living conditions. The human dimension of development must therefore remain an important component of the operational activities of the United Nations system. In that connection his delegation paid a tribute to the work of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which supported projects in Suriname designed to improve the situation of poor unemployed women; it wished to thank the Fund for its involvement in the national efforts.

34. Ms. DINH THI (Viet Nam) said that her country attached great importance to the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, which had made a considerable contribution to the social and economic development of the developing countries.

35. General Assembly resolution 44/211 was a landmark, for it set out ways to improve and strengthen operational activities. Her delegation commended the speed with which some United Nations organizations had responded to the requests made in the resolution, thus making operational activities more effective: speedy project implementation, harmonization, flexibility, simplification of rules and procedures, decentralization, and enhancement of the authority of resident co-ordinators, as well as the active involvement of recipient Governments in project planning and execution, were all crucial factors in that regard. Her country supported all the efforts which would be made to ensure the full implementation of resolution 44/211.

36. With regard to the mobilization of financial resources, it was regrettable that the resources for operational activities had declined in real terms. The results of the latest pledging conference had not fully met the expectations of the developing countries.

37. Since its foundation UNDP had played a very important role in furnishing assistance to the developing countries. Its Governing Council had recently adopted a decision on agency support costs which would strengthen the role of Governments in project execution.

38. UNFPA was being entrusted with increasingly arduous and important tasks as a result of the population explosion in the contemporary world. The Fund's achievements deserved commendation, for it had succeeded in curbing population growth and making the public aware of the interaction between population and development. Her delegation welcomed the results of the International Forum on Population in the Twenty-first Century, held in Amsterdam in November 1989, and

(Ms. Dinh Thi, Viet Nam)

endorsed the objectives, priorities and approaches set out in the Amsterdam Declaration. They should be taken into account in the formulation of all population policies and programmes at the national and international levels.

39. UNICEF had made remarkable progress in the "child survival revolution", achieving a considerable reduction in child mortality rates. It had played a leading role in the improvement of the living conditions of children in various parts of the world. The World Summit for Children had adopted unanimously a Declaration and Plan of Action which set out guidelines for action to benefit children. There was no doubt that UNICEF would make a decisive contribution to the attainment of the objectives set forth in those two documents.

40. The World Food Programme (WFP) had acted successfully to overcome temporary food shortages. It also helped countries to increase their food output and achieve self-sufficiency; it deserved praise for its efforts on behalf of the developing countries. However, the food aid channelled through United Nations organizations should be programmed coherently so as to ensure its full integration in the development programmes of the recipient countries. That was a condition of effective action. In that connection her delegation supported the recommendation of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation that WFP, in co-operation with other United Nations bodies, could be invited to recommend steps to bring about the greater integration of food aid with the other assistance provided by the system.

41. Her delegation stressed that in 1990 the joint efforts of the Vietnamese Government and United Nations agencies had made it possible to increase considerably the delivery rate of the programmes and projects of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP. Her Government would spare no effort to complete those programmes and projects by the end of 1991. It was collaborating actively with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF in the formulation of the country programmes for the fifth programming cycle. It expressed its gratitude to all those agencies for the advice and assistance which they furnished.

42. Mr. BAHLOULI (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) said that UNIDO had taken full account of General Assembly resolution 44/211, which was a synthesis of a large number of resolutions and decisions adopted by the United Nations system. It would spare no effort to implement the various components of the resolution and thereby satisfy the emerging requirements of the developing countries.

43. The Industrial Development Board was currently considering a thorough reorganization of UNIDO which should result not only in a new organizational structure but also in a new approach to its activities. The reorganization was designed to achieve, amongst other things, the concentration and strengthening of technical expertise, the expansion of analytical activities at the sectoral level, the sharpening of the country focus, and the improvement of contacts with the developing countries. The goal was to facilitate a more integrated approach to development problems at the programme level.

(Mr. Bahlouli, UNIDO)

44. At the country level, UNIDO staff members already had accommodation in the UNDP field offices. They were thus in an excellent position to furnish interdisciplinary advice and to co-ordinate or integrate the programming and implementation of the activities of the United Nations system. Many countries agreed that UNIDO activities at the country level were a model for the deployment and decentralization of technical capabilities. Those activities depended almost entirely on the sectoral support of UNDP, reimbursement to UNIDO of its support costs, and the special contributions of Member States.

45. UNIDO would also continue to participate actively in the joint studies currently being carried out by several agencies on such subjects as interdisciplinary advice at the field level, improvement of programming methodology, procurement procedures, and increased use of national capacities.

46. UNIDO appreciated the importance which the Committee attached to the strengthening of co-operation and co-ordination among United Nations organizations. It attached particular importance itself to the discussions with UNDP on the arrangements for agency support costs. The outcome of those discussions would determine future operational activities and therefore the implementation of some of the fundamental elements of resolution 44/211.

47. UNIDO was doing its utmost to co-operate actively with UNDP and other agencies with a view to developing an optimum arrangement to facilitate the changes desired by Member States. However, a serious constraint could well hamper the agencies' work: at a time when programme budget proposals for 1992-1993 were being prepared, the fact that consultations with UNDP had not yet concluded was a source of uncertainty; meanwhile, the imposition of a zero-growth regular budget and the shrinking resource base were also likely to constitute serious obstacles to the desired changes.

48. In the opinion of UNIDO, the developing countries would best be served by a cohesive United Nations system. That was one of the main objectives of resolution 44/211, and UNIDO would work relentlessly to achieve it.

49. Mr. BORCHARD (Germany) noted that the year following the adoption of resolution 44/211 had been marked by a considerable improvement in international relations and by several important events which would influence the operational activities of the United Nations system: the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, the Paris Declaration and Programme of Action of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the thirty-seventh session of the Governing Council of UNDP and its decisions on the fifth programming cycle, the Amsterdam Declaration and, finally, the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the World Summit for Children.

50. One year after the adoption of that resolution, determined steps by the United Nations system to achieve a workable decentralization of operational activities and real co-ordination and collaboration between the different organizations of the system were still awaited. Progress to date had been very slow and much remained

(Mr. Borchard, Germany)

to be done to meet the priorities set out in document A/45/273, namely: system-wide adjustments under a short-term schedule; decentralization to the country level; preference for system-wide, recipient-oriented programmes under simplified procedures; and a strengthening of national capacities and integrated programming.

51. His delegation endorsed the recommendations of the Director-General contained in document A/45/273/Add.5 concerning the revised schedule of implementation of resolution 44/211, and particularly his views concerning the integrated operational response of the United Nations system.

52. The Governing Council of UNDP had at its last session established important guidelines for the purpose of improving the operational activities of the United Nations system. The decision concerning the fifth programming cycle would have the effect of focusing UNDP activities more strongly on the alleviation of poverty. The introduction of specific thematic priorities would allow UNDP to make greater use of its comparative advantages and to strengthen its multilateral profile.

53. Some progress had been made with respect to the role of UNDP as the central institution for the funding and co-ordination of operational activities. Further forceful measures must, however, be taken in connection with regulations and procedures. With respect to the World Food Programme (WFP), his delegation shared the view of the Nordic countries and Canada that measures must be taken to ensure that WFP was effectively governed by Member States.

54. The slow progress in the implementation of Council decisions concerning agency support costs was a matter of concern. UNDP and the other agencies concerned should co-operate in a constructive manner with a view to improving the quality of operational activities. The specialized agencies should make greater use of their comparative advantages and concentrate on technical assistance while gradually phasing out purely administrative tasks.

55. The decision concerning national execution reaffirmed the responsibility of recipient countries for the implementation of UNDP-assisted programmes and projects. While supporting that approach, his delegation believed that it should be introduced gradually and that UNDP should provide appropriate support wherever necessary. It also hoped that the system would be opened up to local and international NGOs and would permit real participation on the part of the populations affected by such measures. It fully supported the conclusions of the Director-General in his report (A/45/273/Add.5) with respect to the difficulties encountered by a number of developing countries in that regard. It was for that reason that it urged UNDP to draw up as soon as possible a set of draft operational guidelines for the implementation of that decision.

56. National execution presupposed the existence of adequate national capacities. The Governments of recipient countries, together with the resident co-ordinators, were responsible for ensuring that that requirement was met. It was therefore extremely important to strengthen the position of the resident co-ordinator. In

(Mr. Borchard, Germany)

that respect, his delegation welcomed the joint endeavours of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy. It was satisfying to note that the Group was playing an ever more active role in the co-ordination of programming, the harmonization of procedures and the securing of common premises for the four major funding agencies.

57. The Director-General had referred in his statement to staff and extrabudgetary resource requirements. In that connection, his delegation reaffirmed that all possibilities should be explored for the redeployment of existing capacities in other departments of the United Nations Secretariat.

58. Mr. BROWN (International Fund for Agricultural Development) recalled that IFAD, which had always sought to ensure that its work to alleviate rural poverty was conducted in close co-operation with other international and bilateral aid agencies, had in 1988 become a member of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy, together with UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP. Five key funding agencies of the United Nations system were thus pooling their efforts in the context of the Group, which was proving to be an ever more effective co-ordination structure. The Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation was closely associated with the work of the Group, which had been chaired in 1990 by IFAD. As the five agencies together accounted for a substantial share of the resources devoted to development by the United Nations system, their efforts to strengthen their co-operation were of great relevance. From the outset, the Group had been determined to identify areas of common interest and means of ensuring co-operation among its members; thus, the executive heads of the five agencies had addressed a joint letter to their field representatives highlighting areas in which substantive co-operation could be undertaken. The executive heads were also encouraging a synchronization of project and programming cycles to match the planning cycle of the country concerned. Field staff were taking those calls for harmonization and co-ordination of activities very seriously. The Group held a high-level meeting of executive heads once each year to discuss a subject of common interest which, in 1990, had been that of poverty alleviation. That subject was of particular interest at a time when the international community was according greater recognition to the problems of poverty and development in a period of economic adjustment and recognizing that the problem of poverty alleviation was not simply a welfare issue but one of developing under-utilized productive capacity which could contribute to economic growth and national development at a relatively low cost. Specifically, the executive heads had chosen five countries where a major process of operational collaboration focusing on poverty alleviation would be undertaken.

59. The Joint Consultative Group on Policy also usually held three general meetings each year, at which it endeavoured to transpose the policy directives of the high-level meetings into meaningful action. It had established six sectoral sub-groups: the Harmonization Sub-Group, which sought to harmonize and simplify the procedures and policies of member agencies; the Women in Development Sub-Group; the Adjustment Sub-Group, which was maintaining a dialogue with IMF to ensure that poverty-related issues received due attention in the Fund's approach to the design

(Mr. Brown, IFAD)

of adjustment programmes; systematic exchanges of views would now be conducted between the Group and IMF prior to the formulation of adjustment programmes, and the developing countries concerned would be able to draw on the support of United Nations agencies in designing, monitoring and evaluating programmes; the Africa Sub-Group, which was considering how the five agencies of the Group could try to address the critical situation of that continent; and, finally, the Sub-Group on Common Premises and Services and the Sub-Group on Personnel and Training. The five member agencies of the Group were also co-operating in the field. Their field representatives were encouraged to meet regularly as a Group country team. In the course of its work, the Group was determined to apply the directives laid down by the General Assembly to promote co-ordination and collaboration, in a process which was by no means inward-looking but which, on the contrary, was open to other United Nations agencies. It was in that manner that the operational activities of all agencies could be made increasingly coherent and mutually supportive.

60. Mr. TSHERING (Bhutan) agreed that General Assembly resolution 44/211 constituted a milestone in the effort to increase the soundness and relevance of operational activities. The key elements of the resolution were that: priority should be given to the poorest countries in allocating grant resources; national capacities must be strengthened; the programming process and project cycles must be simplified and harmonized; authority must be decentralized; and the system of resident co-ordinators must be strengthened. Those ideas, which were not actually new, had been integrated for the first time in a General Assembly resolution.

61. His country placed great value on its co-operation with the United Nations system, which had begun when Bhutan had become a Member of the United Nations in 1971. Over the years, his country had benefited significantly from the activities of United Nations agencies. UNDP and other organizations of the United Nations system were its principal sources of development assistance. Roads, bridges, schools and hospitals had been built, and programmes carried out in the social services sector with the help of contributions from UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP. High priority had been given to training, as the country lacked both qualified and unskilled manpower. Using Bhutan's IPF resources, UNDP was carrying out a major human resources development project, and his delegation appreciated the fact that the UNDP Administrator was giving "development with a human face" high priority on his agenda.

62. The projects and programmes supported by United Nations agencies formed an integral part of Bhutan's five-year plans; thus, any disruption of their implementation could adversely affect the country's development. United Nations assistance, then, must be relevant, effective and timely. That was why the alignment of United Nations programming cycles with the planning cycles of recipient countries was important. While the United Nations attached growing importance to the thematic approach to international development as a means of addressing common problems, the specific needs of individual developing countries should not be underestimated, as smaller countries often found it difficult to derive immediate benefits from global and regional thematic programmes. Bhutan, at its level of development, preferred the country programme approach. He stressed

(Mr. Tshering, Bhutan)

the importance of simplifying and harmonizing procedures and modalities for project planning, implementation and evaluation, which would relieve the country's already overburdened administration and enhance project impact. Finally, he welcomed the UNDP initiative to decentralize decision-making and promote national execution, a modality which formed an integral part of the development process itself; he also expressed deep appreciation to UNDP, UNICEF, UNCDF and WFP for their support to his country's development efforts.

63. Mr. SHOQUFAN (Afghanistan) said that his Government attached great importance to the operational activities of the United Nations system, which promoted human-centred development, particularly in the least developed countries. Although there was no doubt that the eradication of poverty, like economic development, was the responsibility of developing countries themselves, generous contributions from donor countries and international organizations were an extremely important factor. Given the new challenges of the 1990s, thought should be given to the future role of operational activities, the continued financing of which should be ensured.

64. Afghanistan was both a land locked and a least developed country. Operational activities there were co-ordinated with the national social and economic development plan with the help of UNDP. UNICEF, too, had carried out various programmes in Afghanistan, and new projects were being undertaken in some provinces. It was to be hoped that UNICEF would further increase its assistance to children and mothers suffering from malnutrition. FAO, for its part, provided very useful technical assistance in developing the agricultural sector. As those United Nations organizations operated smoothly within Afghanistan, he wondered why the same was not true of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which ought to re-examine their positions and resume their activities and development programmes in the country; as a first step, they might send a field study mission to appraise the situation before selecting feasible projects. He thanked all organizations which had increased their activities in Afghanistan, and commended in particular the work carried out under the leadership of the Co-ordinator for Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes Relating to Afghanistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

65. Mr. BOGNER (Austria) noted that recent upheavals, particularly in Eastern Europe, had underscored the importance of sound national economic policies backed up by a political environment characterized by popular participation in the decision-making process. The Gulf crisis was a bitter reminder of the fact that man could destroy in a few days what it had taken years to build.

66. Operational activities for development had a history of 40 years. Like other areas in which the United Nations was active, they had increasingly come under critical scrutiny: donor country Governments, pressed by budgetary constraints, wanted a better idea of how their contributions were providing cost-effective assistance to the development of developing countries. Officials of international organizations, and the governing bodies of those organizations in particular, had to prove that progress was being made at all times, and yet there was a general

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feeling, both in Member States and in the various organizations, that the time was ripe for reform.

67. Some parts of the United Nations system required a complete overhaul, while others merely needed corrective measures. In other words, it was time for a general review of the functioning of operational activities for development. Experience showed that national delegations in the governing bodies of certain international organizations had difficulty in understanding how the different parts of the system worked and what effects some important decisions, often reached as a compromise after exhausting negotiations, would have. There was no doubt that some current problems relating to the functioning of operational activities had their origin in work that had been done too hastily in the past. To be meaningful, the reforms must be decided system-wide and must result from coherent decisions taken by Member States in full knowledge of the consequences. His Government was following closely the work of UNDP, the central funding agency for technical co-operation, and the other units, funds and specialized agencies concerned, particularly the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

68. The question of successor arrangements for agency support-cost reimbursement had dominated the debate on operational activities for development. The system in use, which consisted of flat-rate compensations to the specialized agencies for their involvement in a project, had serious shortcomings and had not led to the anticipated degree of capacity-building in developing countries. His delegation wished to see the specialized agencies concentrate on programme activities in their own fields of specialization and provide technical inputs to projects on the basis of their lengthy experience; project administration should be left to local authorities and institutions. The new system of support-cost reimbursement had led to an initial decision by the UNDP Governing Council (90/26), which had laid out the general framework for the system, with negotiations to continue until a final decision could be taken in June 1991. However, his delegation was deeply concerned at the slow pace of those negotiations and the unfavourable atmosphere which characterized them. He wondered why a special interpretation had to be given to important provisions of Governing Council decision 90/26, since representatives of UNDP and the agencies concerned had followed every stage of the complex negotiations which had taken place at Geneva. He expected that a genuine effort would be made by all parties prior to the special session of the Governing Council in February 1991 so that substantive proposals could be submitted in writing for discussion. His delegation did not wish to see any attempt to introduce basic changes in the system of technical co-operation administered by the United Nations surreptitiously. He called upon the Director-General to exert his influence with UNDP and the agencies concerned so that a solution that would not jeopardize the tripartite system of operational activities for development, as confirmed in the 1970 consensus, could be reached.

69. The debate over national execution of technical co-operation projects was also being watched closely. While that modality must be promoted to help developing countries build up their national capacities, it was obvious that those capacities had to reach a certain level before national execution could be implemented on a

(Mr. Bogner, Austria)

large scale. Most developing countries still had a long way to go. It would be doing them a disservice to force them to assume responsibility for the execution of technical co-operation projects, unless, of course, they chose that modality of their own accord and their capacity in the sector in question was adequate. Governing Council decision 90/21 merely invited UNDP to encourage the use of that modality within existing conditions, with strict control of quality and accountability maintained. It would be an illusion to believe that national execution could become the sole modality for the execution of operational activities in just a few years. Temporary schemes, such as the international recruitment of project directors, would not serve the purpose.

70. Mr. PERUGINI (Italy) said that the Governing Council of UNDP, at its thirty-seventh session, had adopted a number of decisions of great significance to the future of operational activities for development, including the decision on agency support costs, the rapid implementation of which would improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of project execution. Another important decision was that relating to project execution by national agencies. The aim was to establish a system under which executive responsibility for programme and project management was assumed by the government implementing agency, but with the technical and administrative support of a United Nations specialized agency or, where appropriate, the Office for Projects Services of UNDP. It was desirable to move as rapidly as possible towards execution by national agencies as the normal modality for UNDP-financed projects and programmes. Nevertheless, the shift must be based on a case-by-case analysis. It was up to each recipient Government to decide when and to what extent it wished to assume that responsibility.

71. In that connection it was crucial to strengthen the national capacities of developing countries in order to enable them to apply that approach when they felt able to assume the concomitant responsibilities. Moreover, it was essential for the Governing Council of UNDP, at its next special session, to allocate adequate funds, in the framework of the special resources of the Programme, for the implementation of the Special Plan of Economic Co-operation for Central America.

72. The Executive Board of UNICEF must now concentrate its attention on the structural problems and priorities of its programme, following the spectacular promotional initiative of the World Summit for Children. UNICEF was co-operating more and more with other agencies in new areas of development, such as education. Primary health care activities should be better rooted in the political and socio-economic infrastructures of the recipient countries. It was time to formulate an in-depth review of how to integrate separate programmes, such as immunization, into self-sustainable systems of primary health care. UNICEF must also play a more active role in emergency relief operations, an important activity in all respects. The Executive Board should therefore verify the adequacy of policies and structures in that domain.

73. His delegation had already expressed its concern about inter-agency co-ordination. As UNICEF extended the scope of its activities to new areas, it was imperative to strengthen co-ordination with other organizations, and for the

(Mr. Perugini, Italy)

Executive Board to examine fundamental problems more carefully. Italy's future contributions to UNICEF would depend on the quality and effectiveness of its programmes.

74. His Government was pleased with the activities carried out by UNFPA in the population field, to which it attached great importance. The Fund was an agency which operated efficiently as a result of the structural and financial reforms undertaken by its Executive Director.

75. General Assembly resolution 44/211 was of the utmost importance, since it provided a reference framework for efforts to improve multilateral co-operation. The new approaches contained therein constituted a real challenge for the United Nations system.

76. The Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation was seeking to apply the provisions of the resolution with determination. But the measures taken to that end by the United Nations system seemed very inadequate. The question was whether adequate resources were available. If not, a report should be submitted to the Fifth Committee at the current session.

77. An integrated operational response by the United Nations system to national programme frameworks should lead to better co-ordination of United Nations agency activities at the country level. The report of the Director-General contained interesting proposals on the subject, including the idea of launching pilot experiments in a few developing countries. In that context, the two instruments - the national programme framework and the integrated operational response - should evolve together in a fruitful interaction between the recipient Government and United Nations field offices, under the leadership of the resident co-ordinator. That was a very simple mechanism which should be used in a flexible and cost-effective manner on a country-specific basis. Such an approach should, in the long term, reduce the wastage of resources and duplication. His delegation also hoped that environmental considerations would be taken into account in the context of operational activities for development.

78. Mr. KING (Trinidad and Tobago) emphasized the continued relevance of operational activities to the development of developing countries. The amount of resources allocated to technical co-operation remained very small in comparison with total bilateral assistance. Multilateral funding was, however, a vital element in the development of the countries of the South.

79. United Nations machinery for multilateral technical co-operation had evolved over the years in order to meet the growing needs of developing countries more effectively. During that process of adaptation, certain fundamental characteristics had been preserved, and must continue to be preserved in the interest of developing countries: universality, neutrality and voluntary funding.

80. Developing countries were at varying stages of development and their needs were thus different, but technical co-operation remained crucial to each. The

(Mr. King, Trinidad and Tobago)

neutrality of multilateral technical assistance was a vital quality. The selection of priority areas in which to seek assistance must remain the exclusive responsibility of the Governments of developing countries. In his report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/211 (A/45/273/Add.5), which contained measures to enhance the effectiveness of technical co-operation for development, the Director-General had indicated that while some measures, such as decentralization and the removal of obstacles to national project execution, must be implemented without delay, others, such as the integrated operational response to national programme frameworks, must be further considered by Member States, since time was required to assess the operational impact and implications of that modality.

81. He stated his appreciation of the work of the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions (Operational Activities) on the implementation of resolution 44/211. The Consultative Committee could make an effective contribution to the development of a co-ordinated approach in that area.

82. Since UNDP continued to play a central role in the funding of operational activities for development, and bearing in mind the importance of the question of successor arrangements for agency support costs, the Governing Council must be encouraged to take a leading role in their development. The decision it had adopted on that matter at its preceding session should facilitate transition to a system which was better geared to the needs of developing countries. The decision on national project execution formed part of an overall package aimed at stimulating multilateral technical co-operation. Prompt action in that area was needed.

83. The decision on the fifth programming cycle had demonstrated the necessity for substantial growth in resources so that the needs of the poorest countries could be addressed without compromising assistance to other countries.

84. He noted with satisfaction that UNDP had taken a broad view of contemporary realities in addressing the particular situation of small island developing countries.

85. It was for each country to determine its own priorities and formulate its development plan. Integration of the operational activities of the United Nations system into national plans and objectives would enhance the effectiveness of those activities, given that the response of the system would be more country-specific.

86. Mr. JOMAA (Tunisia) said that the aim of technical co-operation was to mobilize skills so as to contribute to resolving the complex problems of development. It was thus important to strengthen the role of the United Nations system as a central forum in that area.

87. It was time for the international community to adopt a broader view of technical co-operation for development in order to give new momentum to the programmes, so as to develop and diversify technical co-operation among developing countries as a means of multinational co-operation in the developing world.

(Mr. Jomaa, Tunisia)

88. Technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC) was a multidimensional area of co-operation that could serve as a framework for the interaction of developed countries, developing countries and interregional and international organizations and make it possible to apply formulas that might give a new impetus to technical co-operation.

89. Tunisia, which had long experience of technical co-operation, had multiplied its TCDC activities, particularly with UNDP. However, there was a bottle-neck in the programmes executed with UNDP, mainly because of the marginal treatment of TCDC as compared with the other activities of the United Nations system; in addition, there was no mechanism that would allow it to be integrated into the other programmes. The problem was aggravated by the lack of information on the capacities of developing countries and by various obstacles to the implementation of agreements concluded in that area with certain developing countries. The current rules and procedures used in the system should be made simpler, more flexible and better co-ordinated, and the industrialized countries should be associated with TCDC activities under tripartite programmes of co-operation.

90. National execution, programme approach and arrangements concerning the support costs of organizations were interdependent factors whose co-ordinated implementation would allow the United Nations technical co-operation system to respond more effectively to the development needs of developing countries.

91. Tunisia noted with satisfaction that the Board of Directors of UNDP, in its decision 90/34 on the fifth programme cycle, had retained TCDC as one of six priority areas for the cycle, thereby manifesting its determination to integrate TCDC in all programmes financed by it.

92. The resident co-ordinators should serve as team leaders of United Nations organizations at the country level to ensure effective co-ordination of the system's support of implementation of the national social and economic development strategy.

93. Tunisia deeply regretted that UNDP had decided to reduce by about 40 per cent the indicative planning figures (IPF) for the regional programmes of the fifth programme cycle. While it was only fair that the international community should increase its contribution to the least developed countries, it should not do so to the detriment of other developing countries whose economic situation was still precarious. The best way to help the poorest nations would be to commit additional financial resources in proportion to the needs. It was also regrettable that the IPF of many developing countries had been reduced for the fifth cycle; for Tunisia, the reduction was in the order of 10 per cent, at a time when the country had decided to increase its voluntary contribution to the core resources of UNDP.

94. Mr. DUTT (India) said that the operational activities of the United Nations system had been a vital prop of the development efforts of developing countries; they had enabled those countries to make more efficient use of their human, physical and financial resources, to raise productivity, to strengthen their

(Mr. Dutt, India)

institutions and to improve their skills in many fields. Because India accorded high priority to those activities, it had maintained its level of contribution to the various funds and programmes for 1991, despite very severe financial constraints caused largely by the Gulf crisis. However, it was imperative to develop operational activities in order to meet the challenges of development. That would require an appreciable increase in available resources, which were clearly inadequate. Donor countries should contribute more generously, and should do so on a continuous and predictable basis.

95. To bolster the spirit of partnership, such activities should be guided solely by technical and economic considerations; the ideological predilections of the donors should play no part in the selection of projects. In that context, it was necessary to adhere fully to the principles contained in the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

96. General Assembly resolution 44/211 clearly reaffirmed the sovereign right of each recipient country to determine its own priorities, because each assumed sole responsibility for planning, programming, design, management, implementation, co-ordination and assessment in regard to the assistance provided for operational activities. Those activities should help developing countries to make better use of their national resources. The system's technical support activities should also be adapted to the specific conditions and needs of countries, and that would require a significant delegation of authority from headquarters to country level.

97. Resolution 44/211, along with decentralization, stressed the need for increased co-ordination at the country level so as to integrate technical assistance programmes into the national development framework. That function could best be carried out by individual Governments. The resident co-ordinators should, however, support them in that task and play an active role in co-ordinating sectoral inputs as part of a cohesive programme, by leading a multidisciplinary team consisting of representatives of the specialized agencies.

98. Governments must be encouraged to assume responsibility for the management of programmes and projects, which would require modification of current procedures that favoured agency execution. The specialized agencies must focus their efforts on the specific areas where they had a comparative advantage and limit themselves to technical support. The long-term objective of operational activities was not merely the completion of projects in accordance with certain systemic norms, but also the reinforcement of the institutional capacities of the recipient countries. In India's case, government execution of some projects had led not only to greater cost-efficiency and improved programme delivery but also to considerably enhanced utilization of national skills. However, it was indispensable to simplify, harmonize and adapt the rules and procedures governing all aspects of programming so as to ensure the success of that modality.

99. Procurement from developing countries for operational activities remained disappointingly low: it continued to be concentrated in a handful of developed countries, wher as a broader recourse to the capacities of developing countries

(Mr. Dutt, India)

would help significantly to reduce delivery costs and, especially, to enlarge the human resource and technological bases of those countries; it was therefore essential to pursue the efforts to increase procurement from developing countries.

100. As the central funding mechanism for the technical co-operation activities of the United Nations system, UNDP should be strengthened. It should also resist all attempts by donors to impose their preferences to the detriment of national priorities, since it would become ineffectual if it failed to respond to the needs of developing countries. With regard to the fifth programme cycle, it was regrettable that the criteria for calculating national IPFs did only partial justice to General Assembly resolution 44/211, which emphasized the need for priority allocation of scarce grant resources to projects in low-income countries. He welcomed the allocation of 55 per cent of country IPF resources to the least developed countries, but saw no reason to penalize other developing countries, some of which had per capita incomes of less than $375 per year.

101. The United Nations Fund for Population Activities played a central role in the field of population, which was an issue of the highest priority in most developing countries. In India there was a national consensus on activities in that sector; the close correlation between population and development was widely recognized, as was the connection between family planning and child health. India had benefited greatly from the Fund's population programmes and was grateful for its extremely valuable assistance. The Fund deserved full support in its activities from all countries.

102. His delegation attached great importance to the activities of UNICEF, expressed gratitude for the universal child immunization programme undertaken in India and urged all Governments to continue supporting UNICEF so that it could continue its remarkable work.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
37th meeting
held on
Thursday, 8 November 1990
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 37th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. PAPADATOS	(Greece)
later:	Mr. AMAZIANE (Vice-Chairman)	(Morocco)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/45/3, A/45/621, A/45/643; A/C.2/45/8)

1. Mr. BLANCA (Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (A/45/621), said that it contained information on action taken to implement the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/236 and also gave information on the status of existing international protocols and conventions for mutual assistance in cases of disasters.

2. At the national level, 71 countries had established national committees or focal points for the Decade. Many national committees were in the process of preparing their own plans of action for the Decade. At the international scientific level, the International Council of Scientific Unions had established an ad hoc committee for the Decade which had met in Bulgaria in October 1990 to identify Decade-related projects. The Union of International Technical Associations and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations had also held a joint meeting in Paris to identify the objectives and features of technical projects for the Decade.

3. The report provided details about the activities of the United Nations system, which was endeavouring to identify and mobilize the capacities of its constituent organizations to promote Decade objectives. In June 1990, he had chaired a meeting of the United Nations system Steering Committee to give the necessary impetus to system-wide activities. He had also consulted with the Steering Committee about the membership of the Scientific and Technical Committee for the Decade, and it had been agreed that the organizations concerned would prepare plans and projects to be considered by that Committee. It was extremely important that a solid foundation should be laid for the work of the Scientific and Technical Committee, which should provide guidance for scientific and technical activities undertaken in the context of the Decade and adopt a framework programme setting out goals, targets and proposals for such activities. The Scientific and Technical Committee would also consider the disaster prevention and mitigation capacities of developing countries and ways of providing those countries with the technology required for that purpose. As co-ordinator for United Nations programmes and activities during the Decade, he intended to ensure that the relevant bodies of the United Nations system were adequately prepared for meetings of the Scientific and Technical Committee and that the Committee's work received adequate follow-up.

4. The Decade had been the subject of discussions at the recent joint meetings of the Advisory Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC). Participants had stressed the importance of Decade activities and had called for greater efforts to integrate disaster prevention and mitigation in the development process, an effort which he considered crucial, in view of the severe negative impact natural disasters had on developing countries. The joint meetings had also emphasized the need to make full use of the existing substantive

capacities of the United Nations system. To that end, a careful assessment of those capacities would be required.

5. The Decade secretariat which was being established must make full use of existing technical capacities of the United Nations and of those of UNDRO in particular. It must serve as a facilitator, catalyst and co-ordinator, while UNDRO and other organizations had responsibility for executing specific activities. The roles of the secretariat and UNDRO should complement each other, and he intended to ensure that collaboration between the two was fully realized.

6. It was therefore necessary to ensure that the resources needed to carry out the activities called for in General Assembly resolution 44/236 were available; much remained to be done in that regard. Consultations were currently in progress on the composition of the special high-level council; it was therefore imperative that an effective secretariat should be established as quickly as possible.

7. Mr. ESSAAFI (United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator) said that the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction was a reconfirmation of the validity of the past efforts of UNDRO to assist disaster-prone countries in reducing their vulnerability through practical mitigation measures. UNDRO had already played a major role in preparing for the Decade by providing secretariat support services and organizing and servicing the meetings of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and of the United Nations Steering Committee for the Decade. It would continue to provide the necessary support for the Decade and had already made considerable efforts to incorporate the objectives of the Decade into its project activities.

8. UNDRO had begun implementation of two major sectoral projects. The first involved a co-operative effort with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the field of global disaster management training. The second project was geared towards the development of an international interactive information management system to support relief co-ordination and disaster mitigation.

9. A number of key points should be borne in mind. First, a close link should always be maintained between the activities of the Decade and actual responses to disasters. Secondly, awareness and acceptance of the concept of disaster mitigation must be increased, and the existing human network for disaster management must be strengthened. Thirdly, resources must be found to sustain an adequate level of activities. Lastly, all participants in the field of disaster management must work together in a co-ordinated way towards common objectives; in particular, the danger of parallel - and contradictory - approaches must be avoided.

10. Mr. MERANI (Director, International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction secretariat) noted that major efforts were under way in observance of the Decade. At the national level, many countries had observed the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction. The Organization of American States had passed a consensus resolution on that body's contribution to the Decade. Japan had recently convened an international conference on the Decade which had been attended by experts in disaster reduction from the international community and the United

(Mr. Merani)

Nations system; that event would have an impact on the framework programme for the Decade which was being elaborated.

11. Various organizations within the United Nations system had also been developing plans and projects which would be considered by the Scientific and Technical Committee for the Decade. He cited in that context a joint UNDRO/UNDP training programme aimed at developing the expertise of national personnel as well as UNDP resident representatives in disaster relief and mitigation. The World Health Organization (WHO) had decided that the theme of the next World Health Day would be "Disasters". The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) had made "Natural disaster reduction" the theme of the 1990 World Meteorological Day. In addition to brochures and a video on that topic, WMO had developed three projects designed to achieve Decade goals. UNESCO and the World Bank had also engaged in Decade-related activities.

12. Like the Director-General, he attached great importance to the preparations for the work of the Scientific and Technical Committee, which would meet for the first time in early 1991. It was important that that Committee should address the question of national capacities and the acquisition of the necessary technology by developing countries. The Decade secretariat would hold an informal consultation the following week to advise the members of the Scientific and Technical Committee with regard to an agenda and documentation. The meeting would be attended by experts and by representatives of the United Nations organizations concerned and would be held at Castelnuovo di Porto, Italy, with financial support from UNDP. A meeting of the Inter-agency Working Group would be held at Geneva to assess the outcome of that consultation.

13. The recent joint ACC/CPC meetings had highlighted the need to accelerate the pace of implementation of Decade activities at the international level. The results of those meetings would be taken fully into account by the Decade secretariat and transmitted to the Scientific and Technical Committee for consideration as that body elaborated the framework programme.

14. Once fully established, the Decade secretariat would make full use of the existing substantive capacities in the system, particularly those of UNDRO. The role of co-ordinator and catalyst, which was assigned to the secretariat, was viewed as totally distinct from the implementation role assigned to UNDRO and other organizations. The secretariat had a clear conception of the way in which it must function in relation to other United Nations bodies.

15. The secretariat would be a small one, funded from extrabudgetary resources and supported by experts provided by United Nations organizations, Governments and non-governmental organizations. In addition to the Director, it would comprise two or three professional or higher-level staff who would focus on relations with national committees and the development of national capacities. Those posts, together with costs relating to consultants and support staff, travel and equipment, should be funded from voluntary contributions. The secretariat would also rely on the services of experts from Governments and the United Nations

(Mr. Merani)

system. To date, the services of one expert had been provided by the United States of America, and Japan and the Soviet Union would second experts in the near future, while other countries were actively considering that possibility. Officials had been seconded by WMO and WHO, with other organizations, including the League of Red Cross Societies, considering the matter. Voluntary contributions would also have to cover some or all of the costs of meetings of the special high-level council and the Scientific and Technical Committee and other expert consultations that might prove necessary.

16. The secretariat intended to exercise prudence and thrift in the utilization of resources. It would, however, have to be expanded over time as its workload increased and as it sought to attain greater credibility with the international community. The secretariat must be endowed with a minimal capacity to provide substantive servicing to the bodies being established and greater support to national efforts. In its resolution 44/236 and in the joint ACC/CPC meetings, the General Assembly had attached importance to the mobilization of resources for the Trust Fund for the Decade, which was also intended to provide resources for project activities within the United Nations system. Once the framework programme had been developed by the Scientific and Technical Committee and priority activities identified, it would be easier to determine the volume of resources required.

17. Mr. HINTEREGGER (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the activities currently under way or planned within the United Nations system relating to the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and its consequences (A/45/643), said that it provided information about the various activities of the specialized agencies with regrad to the accident and included a status report by IAEA on the major project carried out by a group of international experts to assess the radiological consequences of the Chernobyl accident on human health and the environment. It also made particular reference to agreements between the Government of the USSR and specialized agencies, notably IAEA, WHO and UNESCO, and dealt with the work of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), and that of the Inter-Agency Committee for the Response to Nuclear Accidents (IAC/RNA), which had been established following the accident.

18. The report also gave an account of the United Nations fact-finding mission to the areas affected by the Chernobyl accident. The mission, comprising representatives of UNICEF, the United Nations Office at Vienna, UNEP, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, UNDRO, DTCD and ECE, had been primarily concerned with economic and social, rather than scientific or technical, issues. It had identified a number of common priority concerns. Special mention was made of the fact that the initial response to the accident had focused on scientific and technical problems, rather than on informing the public about radiation contamination and its potential health effects. The result of that omission had been anxiety and a lack of confidence in official pronouncements. To deal with such reactions the preparation of a scientifically justified concept for safe living in the contaminated areas was advocated as a matter of urgency. In questions of health care and nutrition, the highest priority had been accorded to

(Mr. Hinteregger)

the protection of children, and other vulnerable groups. Resettlement of the population had been complicated by the lack of clear data on safe levels of radiation.

19. The report contained a variety of recommendations for further action within the United Nations system. It noted that the Chernobyl nuclear accident could not be regarded as the problem of one nation. In response to the appeals for international assistance made by the Governments of the USSR, the Byelorussian SSR, and the Ukrainian SSR, efforts had already been made by Governments and NGOs, business and scientific groups and individuals to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident. With a view to providing the appropriate machinery within the United Nations system to handle a broad range of international activities on the problem, the report recommended that the General Assembly should establish a United Nations programme of international co-operation to mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

20. The report also recommended that a special fund should be set up to receive voluntary contributions to finance the Programme, and that the Secretary-General should designate a co-ordinator for the programme and an appropriate secretariat.

21. It also noted a growing need for closer co-operation among the organizations involved as the number of projects increased. It recommended that while IAC/RNA should be requested to continue its work on the co-ordination of the scientific and technical activities, the Administrative Committee for Co-ordination should establish as soon as possible a task force to address and mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident. Such a task force would provide a forum for dealing with the socio-economic aspects of the situation in the affected areas.

22. Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that four and a half years had passed since the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, which was situated only 100 km from the Republic's capital, Kiev. More than 1,600 Ukrainian towns and villages, with a combined population of over 15 million, had been contaminated by radiation. A total of 3.5 million hectares of Ukrainian farmland, including 2 million hectares of arable land and 1 million hectares of forests, had been contaminated, and the Ukraine's principal source of drinking water, the Dnieper River, was likely to remain polluted by atomic radiation for a long time to come. More than 1.8 million people, including 380,000 children, lived in highly contaminated areas. Moreover, recent studies had revealed traces of contamination in areas previously considered to be clean. Over the past two years, there had been a significant increase in oncological diseases, particularly thyroid cancer and leukemia among children.

23. In the years since the accident, the Ukrainian SSR had taken vigorous measures to minimize its adverse effects. In the first year after the accident, some 100 million people had been resettled from contaminated zones to 101 new residential areas in uncontaminated regions. In 1990, 15,000 people would be offered apartments in various cities of the Republic. People who had received high doses of radiation were under continuous medical observation and, by the end of

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

1990, some 450,000 people, including 111,000 children, would have received essential medical care.

24. The Chernobyl problem was at the top of the agenda of the new Ukrainian Parliament and Government, which had established a Supreme Soviet Commission on the Chernobyl accident and a State Committee to protect the population from the effects of the Chernobyl accident. A State programme of urgent measures for the years 1990-1992 for dealing with the consequences of the accident in the Ukrainian USSR, and a comprehensive programme for the period up to the year 2000 were currently being prepared.

25. An analysis of all aspects of the situation following the accident led to the obvious conclusion that, given the magnitude of its implications, the Chernobyl disaster had become a global environmental problem. The Ukrainian SSR was well aware that it could not sustain the ongoing and planned restoration and rehabilitation efforts on its own. The international dimension of the Chernobyl problem demanded co-ordinated international action, and the Ukrainian SSR had been heartened by the many offers of assistance it had received from Governments and international organizations.

26. His delegation attached particular importance to Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/50 on international co-operation to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. The main provisions of that resolution opened up a new and vitally important area for the activities of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. The principal objective of such activities should be to work out a new and comprehensive approach to international co-operation in dealing with the Chernobyl problem.

27. The report of the Secretary-General on the Chernobyl accident (A/45/643) contained detailed and objective information on measures which had been carried out or which were planned by United Nations bodies and specialized agencies in order to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl tragedy. If implemented, the recommendations contained in the report would constitute an adequate international response to the global challenge of Chernobyl.

28. It was necessary to speed up the implementation of a technical co-operation project with UNEP, WHO and IAEA to explore the environmental and health effects of radiation. The Ukrainian SSR had become a party to an agreement on the establishment of an IAEA international research centre at Chernobyl and it was prepared to offer countries and international organizations every opportunity to conduct a broad spectrum of research at that centre.

29. Joint studies must be conducted with a view to developing viable methods for the decontamination, recycling and use of contaminated timber resources. The Ukrainian SSR would have to rely on international co-operation to obtain technologies for extracting radioactive silt, and binding radionuclides and preventing them from contaminating rivers and lakes. It was also important to work out recommendations with regard to agricultural production in contaminated areas.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

The Ukrainian SSR was particularly concerned about the problem of "burial grounds" containing thousands of tons of equipment, household items, soil and leaves contaminated above acceptable levels. The main problem, however, was to ensure the safety of the Ukrainian population.

30. In the next few days, the delegations of the Ukrainian SSR, the Byelorussian SSR and the Soviet Union would be submitting a draft resolution on international co-operation to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Its main objective was to impart a sense of direction to the activities of the bodies, organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system in that area and to ensure that those activities were more effective and better co-ordinated. The implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report would facilitate effective concerted action by the bodies, organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, prevent duplication of work and conserve resources.

31. Mr. PETRONE (Italy), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Community, said that the Twelve favoured an initiative by the General Assembly on the subject of international co-operation in the elimination of the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident and would be happy to join in sponsoring a draft resolution along the lines mentioned by the representative of the Ukrainian SSR. He was fully aware of the work that remained to be done in dealing with the aftermath of that accident and of its vast psychological effects on the population of the affected countries. It was clear from the statements just been made that the extent of the contamination was greater than had previously been assumed. It appeared that the tremendous efforts to cleanse contaminated areas were being offset by natural factors that led to recontamination.

32. The efforts of the United Nations system, particularly IAEA and WHO, demonstrated that the United Nations was capable of stimulating international co-operation and mobilizing scarce expertise and resources. Such co-operation was particularly useful in the case of accidents with transboundary consequences. The General Assembly should invite the Secretary-General to formulate a United Nations programme of international co-operation to co-ordinate the activities being carried out by various United Nations organs and agencies. The Assembly should also encourage those bodies to respond to the proposals for co-operation programmes submitted by the Governments of the USSR, the Byelorussian SSR and the Ukrainian SSR. However, the Secretary-General should also define the scope of such an initiative, bearing in mind the need for a rapid, cost-effective response, and mobilize further efforts in support of those countries. The programme thus elaborated should have a specific time-frame and should build upon the findings of IAEA and WHO as to the accident's radiological consequences.

33. The Secretary-General should be given a margin of flexibility in determining co-ordination modalities; if a co-ordinator was needed, it should be an existing Under-Secretary-General, whose mandate should be carefully defined with due attention paid to the need to avoid duplication. Co-ordination efforts and related activities could be financed within existing budgetary provisions. If that was not

(Mr. Petrone, Italy)

possible, appropriate voluntary contributions could be sought from States, non-governmental organizations, research institutions and the private sector.

34. He favoured the establishment of a task force, but drew attention to the need to avoid unnecessary overlap with the work of IAC/RNA. It would be useful if the bodies and agencies concerned could prepare a joint document setting out co-operation goals and modalities. The task force would be composed of the relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, representatives of the Governments concerned and external scientists and experts. The task force would stimulate and monitor the activities of the United Nations system to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident.

35. The Twelve expected to review the implementation of the decisions taken by the General Assembly on the response to the Chernobyl accident at the second regular session of 1991 of the Economic and Social Council and the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. They would also participate constructively in negotiations on that subject in the Second Committee, in order to help alleviate the sufferings of the people affected.

36. With regard to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, he expressed disappointment at the delay in the appearance of the Secretary-General's report (A/45/621) and the patent lack of co-ordination and the intra-secretariat controversy that had accompanied its preparation.

37. Governments had reacted promptly to the proclamation of the Decade, and the Twelve welcomed the fact that many had established national committees or focal points. In that connection, he appealed to Governments to consider disaster policies in the context of environmental protection in general. He also welcomed the Decade-related activities of the United Nations system, which demonstrated the willingness of various organizations to integrate disaster management in their operational activities. The growing interest of the scientific community in disaster preparedness and prevention was also welcome.

38. Nevertheless, many of those activities would have been carried out even if the Decade had not been proclaimed and no resources had been made available to the United Nations. Given the importance of national efforts and the need to avoid any duplication of activities or the wasting of United Nations resources, it was appropriate to inquire what new contributions the Decade and its machinery were making. The Decade secretariat must not compete with UNDRO; rather, the two bodies must maintain the closest co-operation and implement an appropriate division of labour. The Twelve regretted that there had been little such co-ordination thus far, as the Secretary-General's report made evident. In the future, the report should be prepared jointly by UNDRO and the Decade secretariat, and the Director-General should ensure that that was done.

(Mr. Petrone, Italy)

39. The Decade secretariat must make use of all the existing capabilities of UNDRO and policy communications to the Director-General should be channeled through UNDRO. At the same time, the emphasis placed on disaster prevention and preparedness should not detract from UNDRO relief activities. The Decade secretariat should be kept as small as possible in order to be cost-effective. The Twelve could not support the financing of a secretariat of the size described in the report and they looked forward to the views of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the matter.

40. The Twelve were very disappointed at the delay in implementing of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/236 relating to institutional arrangements and suggested that the establishment of the special high-level council called for in the International Framework should be reconsidered. The difficulties experienced in starting up the Decade and the apparent lack of co-ordination within the secretariat might lead the Governments of some members of the European Community to reconsider their financial contributions to the Decade. It was unfortunate that the extrabudgetary funds secured thus far had been used for administrative expenses and subsistence allowances.

41. The Twelve looked forward to helping to formulate a clearer resolution of the Decade during the current session of the General Assembly and hoped that that text would facilitate the co-ordinated implementation of Decade activities and encourage the provision of co-operation and financial support from the donor community.

42. Mr. KOZYREV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Government of the Soviet Union and the Governments of republics affected making every effort to respond in a well-co-ordinated and effective manner to the after-effects of the tragic accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Large-scale operations were under way to resettle people living in contaminated areas, build new towns and villages, improve health care and provide adequate foodstuffs and essential goods and services.

43. The multilateral efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident demonstrated the tremendous potential of the United Nations for developing co-operation in a variety of fields. Several international organizations had already joined in the efforts to resolve Chernobyl-related issues. At the request of the Soviet Union, IAEA was conducting an expert assessment of the situation in affected areas of the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Russia. The Soviet Union was also pursuing co-operation programmes with UNEP, UNESCO, WHO and other agencies. A letter of intent had been signed with WHO to set up an international centre on radiation and medical problems, and the large-scale humanitarian campaign, "Solidarity with the Children of Chernobyl", had been launched in the summer of 1990 in Western Europe with the participation of UNESCO.

44. The increasing involvement of United Nations agencies in Chernobyl-related activities was highly useful, and the Soviet Union hoped that those activities would be conducted in a well-co-ordinated and efficient manner. In that regard, it was important to establish from the very outset an administrative and

(Mr. Kozyrev, USSR)

organizational framework which would avoid duplication, unnecessary expenses and the dissipation of resources. For its part, the Soviet Union would do everything possible to ensure the maximum effectiveness of international efforts.

45. The report of the Secretary-General (A/45/643) contained a comprehensive and objective assessment of the situation and a useful survey of the work being carried out by the United Nations system. The consistent and full implementation of the recommendations contained in the report was a sine qua non for the success of United Nations activities to mitigate the consequences of the disaster.

46. In the next few days, Member States would begin consultations on a draft resolution on international co-operation to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. The Soviet Union welcomed the positive response and willingness of many countries to sponsor the draft, and called upon Member States which had not yet done so to consider sponsoring the draft.

47. Mr. Chin-Min LEE (World Health Organization) reported that WHO had agreed with the Ministry of Health of the Soviet Union to establish a long-term programme to mitigate the health effects in the people exposed to the Chernobyl accident. The programme would focus on health of the people in the affected areas in Ukraine, Byelorussia and Russia, and would emphasize the clinical aspects, with special priority given to medical investigation, treatment of the people exposed and the prevention of certain diseases. The programme would also deal with indirect medical problems brought about by a disaster of such magnitude, for example mental and psychological disturbances, nutritional problems and various aspects of medical rehabilitation. In addition, long-term epidemiological studies and other research would be carried out. All countries would be able ultimately to make use of the study's clinical and scientific knowledge concerning radiation effects gathered by the study. The implementation of the programme would be facilitated through an international centre to be established in the city of Obninsk, located in the affected area of Russia, where the Soviet Union would provide space for buildings and support services.

48. In October 1990, the Scientific Advisory Committee for the programme had held its first meeting in Hiroshima, in collaboration with the Radiation Effects Research Foundation located there. The Committee had reviewed the objectives and proposed activities of the international programme, including the proposed centre, and had made recommendations on its objectives, priorities and implementation. Feeling that the unique exposure circumstances following the accident were of great international scientific and medical importance, and that adoption of a single programme could facilitate the co-ordination of Chernobyl-associated health studies, the Committee had recommended that the proposed international centre at Obninsk be established, as a co-ordinating and information-providing facility. A major element of the international programme would be long-term epidemiological studies on the occurrence of cancer. The WHO International Agency for Research on Cancer was already involved in the initial planning stage.

(Mr. Chin-Min Lee, WHO)

49. WHO would need co-operation in the areas falling within the competence of other specialized agencies, in particular IAEA, and was naturally ready to render assistance to other international organizations in the health area. WHO was an active participant in the work of IAC/RNA which had been set up four years earlier following the accident at Chernobyl. The Committee had not only dealt with the planning of co-ordinated actions to be taken in the event of a future possible accident, but had also been a useful forum to discuss follow-up activities.

50. WHO was co-operating with IAEA and other agencies in the soon-to-be-completed assessment of the accident. It had also provided medical expertise for various health assessment missions. The international programme was to be discussed by the WHO Executive Board in January 1991, and it was expected that the Executive Board's recommendations would be considered further by the World Health Assembly in May 1991.

51. Mr. KRAVCHANKA (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/45/643 showed how much had been achieved by the international community in overcoming the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. However, much work still lay ahead, and the main purpose of the current debate was to seek a central focus for the action taken by various organizations in the wake of that disaster. Paragraph 82 of the report indicated the need for such an integrated approach.

52. The situation in the Byelorussian SSR following the Chernobyl accident was extremely grave. New information had just come to light, revealing much higher levels of radioactive contamination than had previously been suspected. Much of the Minsk region was contaminated, showing caesium-137 levels of over 5 Ci/km^2; while in one district, levels of over 15 Ci/km^2 had been recorded. Furthermore, it was now known that many more isotopes had penetrated the human organism. Five out of the 6 regions of Byelorussia had been affected, and only 1 per cent of the territory remained wholly uncontaminated. Scientific research was also revealing new post-Chernobyl factors, suggesting that the full extent of the disaster had yet to dawn upon the world.

53. The Byelorussian SSR was already co-operating with a number of United Nations specialized agencies and programmes, and also with IAEA, and had concluded a number of agreements on various forms of co-operation. It had received several missions sent by those agencies to study the situation on site, including the special United Nations mission. He stressed that all information at his country's disposal was available to the international community for study and consideration. One of the most important lessons to be learned from the tragedy was the need for such openness of information, and his country was ready to expand its co-operation with all international bodies, non-governmental organizations, scientific and business circles and individuals, for that purpose. In particular, it was prepared to co-operate bilaterally on a mutually beneficial basis. The programme of transition to a market economy, implementation of which had begun on 1 November 1990, contained provision for a system of benefits, including customs tariffs, available to foreign partners participating in overcoming the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Byelorussian SSR)

54. The ongoing activities of the international organizations were assisting in the accumulation and dissemination of important international experience, establishing the basis for a future global system of response to major disasters. Those activities were focused on evaluation of population exposure to radiation, introduction of a system for global monitoring of nuclear and radiological accidents, determination of levels of radionuclide contamination of foodstuffs, methods of large-scale soil decontamination, studies of leukaemia among children, and the long-term effects of prolonged exposure to radiation.

55. The Chernobyl accident could not be viewed as the problem of just one nation. Concerted action by the international community was imperative. An integrated international programme of co-operation would enable international organizations to carry out activities within their own terms of reference and to co-ordinate their activities, thus eliminating duplication, inefficiency and the squandering of resources. A special voluntary fund could also play a useful role. The Secretary-General could be given the task of putting such a programme in place. In particular, he might designate a programme co-ordinator and establish a task force within the Administrative Committee for Co-ordination, to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident. His delegation, together with the delegations of the Ukrainian SSR and the USSR, would continue to hold broad consultations with a view to working out an appropriate draft resolution.

56. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) pointed out that in the past 20 years alone, natural calamities had taken the lives of approximately 3 million people and caused suffering for 800 million more. Japan, a country prone to earthquakes, typhoons, tsunamis and floods, naturally attached great importance to prevention and preparedness. Having been working on that topic at the United Nations since 1987, Japan had been particularly gratified at the proclamation of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction the previous January. Noting with satisfaction that an increasing number of countries had established national committees to promote and implement Decade activities and programmes, he expressed the hope that all nations would include disaster mitigation as part of their national programmes. A conference on the subject, held in Japan the previous month, had been attended by approximately 1,300 experts from governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organs. It had confirmed the need for every country to strengthen its capacity to meet disasters, and in particular had emphasized the importance of establishing a disaster mitigation network and the need to increase public awareness about disaster prevention. As part of its public information effort, Japan had issued a special postage stamp in commemoration of the Decade.

57. Japan was disappointed to see that virtually nothing had yet been done in terms of concrete activities. For example, the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction, proclaimed by resolution 44/236, had simply not been observed by the United Nations. Although the scientific and technical committee had just been formed, it was not yet functioning. It should do so without further delay. The Committee must be action-oriented and produce practical results, and should start by formulating a framework programme for the Decade. It was also regrettable

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

that the special high-level council had not yet been formed. Japan strongly hoped that the organizational arrangements could be completed without further delay.

58. The Decade secretariat must maintain close co-operation with UNDRO. Japan expressed a concern about the current status of that relationship, although it was fully confident that the Director-General would ensure that the situation was rectified as soon as possible. The activities of the Decade were to be financed by extrabudgetary contributions, but funding from the donor community would depend on donor confidence in the work of the Decade. The present situation thus posed very real problems.

59. Japan was committed to the Decade and its objectives, believing firmly that the momentum achieved so far should not be allowed to diminish, and that the International Framework of Action adopted the previous year should be implemented. Japan called on all Member States for efforts to ensure the success of the significant international endeavour.

60. The disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant posed a challenge that simply could not be ignored. Japan hoped that it would prompt the world community as a whole to work to prevent a recurrence of such a disaster. It was of paramount importance that the subject should be studied thoroughly, as the world was increasingly relying on nuclear power. The Secretary-General's report entitled "International co-operation to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant" (A/45/643) gave a comprehensive and very clear picture of the activities currently under way or planned within the United Nations system.

61. It was very encouraging to learn that within their respective mandates the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), the Inter-Agency Committee for the Response to Nuclear Accidents (IAC/RNA), IAEA, and in particular its International Advisory Committee, and other related agencies had undertaken activities to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident.

62. Having suffered the effects of the atomic bomb, Japan felt profound sympathy for all whose lives had been so tragically changed by the accident at Chernobyl, as well as concern about the accident's possible long-term effects on human health and the environment. In consequence, Japan would continue to assist in efforts to address the consequences of the accident, utilizing its unique expertise in the field.

63. In addition, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Soviet Union had signed a memorandum calling for reciprocal visits by Japanese and Soviet experts to facilitate fact-finding and co-operation. It was hoped that such bilateral arrangements would contribute to the essential endeavours of objective and scientific data collection, analysis and assessment.

64. Mr. SADEGHI-TEHRANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that it was discouraging to note from the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/621) that the Trust Fund for the Decade had not yet received sufficient contributions.

65. The earthquake that had struck the north-west of Iran on 21 June 1990 had killed about 50,000 people, injured 60,000, and made half a million homeless, as well as destroying major economic and social infrastructures. In response to the catastrophe, a relief task force had been set up, to co-ordinate national administrative, military and public relief efforts. Those efforts had been matched by a touching international response. On 6 July, the General Assembly had adopted a draft resolution on the issue, appealing to Governments, the United Nations system and the specialized agencies to extend generous assistance to the victims of the disaster. Many countries had responded to that appeal.

66. Although the emergency relief stage was now over, the crucial task of reconstruction still lay ahead. Short-term emergency assistance was not sufficient to address a task of such magnitude. Reconstruction of 15 cities and hundreds of villages was beyond the capacities of a developing country. In addition, scientific planning was needed, in order to prevent a recurrence of such a disaster. The task of planning and execution called for co-operation and assistance on the part of the specialized agencies as well as Member States. The Government was preparing a master plan for reconstruction of the affected areas. Priority had been given to resettlement of the survivors, and a plan for reconstruction of the housing sector had been drawn up in co-operation with Habitat, UNDRO and UNDP. That project could also serve as a basis for continued international assistance to the victims of the disaster.

67. Mr. VAN BRAKEL (Canada) said that the issue of addressing and mitigating the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl power plant presented the Committee with a number of different challenges. The first was a technical and scientific one: to gauge exactly what the consequences of the accident were. Before decisions could be taken to deal with the unprecedented situation, scientific and technical assessments were required to determine what needed to be done and to identify the problems attributable to the accident rather than to other factors.

68. At the same time, it had to be recognized that more than four years had elapsed since the accident, and the sense of urgency felt by those in the affected regions was understandable. Canada welcomed the valuable work being done by IAEA in co-ordinating a wide-ranging assessment of the radiological consequences of the accident, which was nearing completion, and the important work undertaken by WHO on its long-term health implications.

69. The second challenge to be faced was a political one: once the scientific assessments had been completed, it was necessary to determine the most appropriate follow-up and to mobilize the necessary resources. A central focus for co-ordination was required, and priorities must be established. The latter task was particularly important in order to achieve an appropriate match between the needs identified and the availability of resources to deal with them. However, Canada was not convinced that a new structure was required. The task could be accomplished within existing United Nations institutions.

(Mr. Van Brakel, Canada)

70. The crucial importance of public education and communication should not be underestimated. Information was an area in which the United Nations, in co-operation with the scientific and technical agencies, could do much to ease the anxieties and concerns so acutely felt by people in the affected areas.

71. It had been suggested that a special fund should be established to deal with the situation. Canada had reservations on such a project, being unconvinced that it would attract adequate new money. The principal and most realistic contribution which the international community could provide was expertise in helping to assess the situation and in recommending courses of local action, as well as suggestions on how the international community could support such local action.

72. Canada commended the efforts being undertaken by national authorities in close collaboration with the IAEA to improve all aspects of nuclear safety, in particular the recently established programme to assess and, where necessary, upgrade the safety of certain older reactor types.

73. Mrs. DUEÑAS de WHIST (Ecuador) said that while all countries were to some extent exposed to the forces of nature, the burden of mitigation, assistance and reconstruction fell particularly heavy on the developing countries. Better knowledge of the nature of disasters, scientific and technical advances and discoveries, and a better understanding of the multidisciplinary nature of natural phenomena and their effects had led to an awareness of the need for prevention.

74. Disaster prevention was as important as disaster mitigation. Both activities called for education, training and information on systems for evacuation, rescue and first aid. It was the most vulnerable sectors of the population that were most affected by natural phenomena. After the March 1987 earthquakes in Ecuador, UNDRO had acted promptly and dynamically to overcome shortfalls in personnel and resources, and had played a particularly valuable role in management of the information network and co-ordination with local non-governmental organizations and the national administration.

75. In view of the marked increase in the number of natural disasters during 1989, it was all the more surprising that, far from being expanded, the staff of UNDRO had in fact been cut back. If UNDRO's management capacity was reduced, the populations most exposed to natural disasters would suffer in consequence.

76. Early in 1990, in collaboration with UNDRO, the Government of Ecuador had embarked on a global programme of preventive planning and disaster relief, which might have to be abandoned if the necessary expertise was not forthcoming. The first stage of the programme had been satisfactorily completed, and had led to the establishment of multisectoral techniques for disaster prevention and relief, with the active participation of the populations involved.

77. In April 1990, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had held a seminar in Quito, to study disaster prevention and relief methods and mechanisms for international co-ordination of information, data compilation, and organization of international humanitarian aid, particularly in the regional context.

(Mrs. Dueñas de Whist, Ecuador)

78. UNDRO must have the capacity to react almost instantaneously to disasters. It needed specific resources and flexible accounting procedures, for rescue operations could not be held up pending the completion of bureaucratic formalities. The General Assembly should thus envisage an increase in the contingency fund from $US 20,000 to $US 50,000 for each country, with authorization for immediate use of those funds. In that regard, her delegation requested the Secretary-General to provide information on the measures adopted to facilitate UNDRO's application of the rules for general procurement.

79. In order to secure the participation of the population concerned in disaster prevention and relief, a permanent collective information and communication mechanism was required. Indeed, the success of disaster relief depended in large measure on the quality and timeliness of that information and communication. Her delegation therefore hoped that the United Nations administration would be able to assign the necessary financial resources to enable UNDRO to fulfil that important task.

80. She underscored the need for the Decade secretariat to be incorporated in the present structure of UNDRO, and for it to report through UNDRO and in close collaboration with the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation. Her delegation did not favour the establishment of a new bureaucratic structure, which might divert resources and energy that could be better channelled towards programmes to benefit the victims of disasters, and thus, indirectly, the development process.

81. In conclusion, she announced that in June 1990 her Government had decided to set up a High-level Committee for the mitigation of natural disasters. Her delegation also reiterated the willingness of her Government to host the regional office for execution of programmes relating to the Decade.

82. Mr. MARKS (United States of America) said that his delegation strongly supported the goals and objectives of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. Recent devastating natural disasters had drawn attention to the importance of disaster preparedness. Regarding the report of the Secretary-General, his delegation would have welcomed more rapid progress in the establishment of the special high-level council and scientific and technical committee, and hoped that the organizational arrangements, one year after the Decade's adoption, would not be delayed further. With respect to the IDNDR secretariat, his delegaion favoured a very lean organizational structure, well-conceived work plans and an appropriate relationship with UNDRO and other agencies. Its funding should be secured from extrabudgetary resources. His delegation wished to associate itself with the remarks of the representative of the European Economic Community.

83. Turning to the Chernobyl disaster, he said that the presentations by the representatives of the Ukrainian SSR, the Byelorussian SSR and the Soviet Union had made it clear that the United Nations system must participate in the disaster response, by providing assistance to Governments and suffering populations. It

(Mr. Marks, United States)

could also contribute to the study of the accident's effects, to ensure that the lessons learned would be made available to all. The United Nations must make its contribution, however, with the most effective use of resources.

84. He welcomed the very thorough report prepared by the Secretary-General noting, however, that its recommendations were not yet sufficiently defined for formal adoption, and required further discussion.

85. The Secretary-General must use his considerable authority to urge all members of IAC/RNA to make full use of that mechanism. Proposals for new activities should be submitted to a supervising and co-ordinating body. His Government was committed to working with the governing bodies of the organizations of which it was a member, and urged other Governments to follow suit. Existing structures of the United Nations system should be utilized to the greatest extent possible, to avoid dispersing energy and limited resources. For example, an existing body such as IAC/RNA might be able to carry out the activities which it was proposed in paragraph 149 should be assigned to a task force. Responsibility should be placed on the Secretary-General for the use of resources already available to ensure co-ordination within the United Nations system.

86. Mr. KULKARNI (India) said that in recent years, developing countries seemed to have borne the brunt of natural disasters. In countries with fragile economies, such disasters had set back the development process. Disaster preparedness could often do much to reduce their impact, however. Early warning systems must be established in developing countries, in addition to building capacity to assess, predict, prevent and mitigate natural disasters through dissemination of information, technology transfer, education and training. Assessment and prediction of disasters was a complex process, but it could have additional rewards in the environmental sector. Many disasters were caused by man's reckless disregard for the environment.

87. General Assembly resolution 44/236 should be fully implemented without further delay. The objectives of the Decade could be achieved only through concerted action. Disaster prevention and mitigation should be integrated into country development plans. Participation by all the specialized agencies of the United Nations as well as other important elements of the private sector was also necessary.

88. The Decade secretariat had existed for only a few months; therefore, criticism was premature. Every major effort deserved a chance to succeed. In conclusion, his delegation fully agreed with the concept that development in itself increased the capacity of a country to deal with natural disasters; therefore, policies supportive of development could, given the necessary orientation, assist in disaster prevention.

89. Mr. Papadatos (Greece) resumed the Chair.

90. Mrs. TIKANVAARA (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the consequences of the Chernobyl accident had extended beyond the Soviet Union into several other countries, including the Nordic countries. At the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council for 1990, the Nordic countries had stressed the need to achieve the highest standards of safety in countries with nuclear energy programmes. They fully supported the work of IAEA in developing international safety principles, regulations and guidelines.

91. The Nordic countries saw a need for better co-ordination and strengthening of the United Nations system in order to provide the fullest support possible to efforts of national committees for the Decade recently established in the Soviet Union and its republics directly affected by Chernobyl. They called for a generous response by the international community to the financial requirements of the United Nations system, for ongoing as well as new activities.

92. Mr. NINOV (Bulgaria) said that international co-operation in overcoming the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident was not only a humanitarian contribution but also an opportunity for gathering experience for combating similar disasters. Such a venture required colossal technical, scientific and organizational resources which no single country possessed. The ideas put forward in the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/45/643 provided a good basis for consolidating the efforts, experience and technological potential of States in that connection. The Secretary-General had already made an important contribution by mobilizing the efforts of the international community and the relevant United Nations specialized agencies to cope with the consequences of the disaster. He closed his statement by reiterating his country's readiness to join with other nations in their attempts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident and to devise approaches and measures to avert similar disasters in the future.

93. Mr. ISAKSSON (UNESCO) noted that UNESCO had played an active role in international efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and said that, at the meeting of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) at Vienna in May 1990, the Director-General of UNESCO had stated that UNESCO was prepared to participate in the IAEA project to assess the radiological damage resulting from the accident. At the same time, the Director-General had announced that a UNESCO mission had been sent to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic to discuss the formulation of a project in line with decisions taken by the USSR Supreme Soviet to launch a unified programme to mitigate the consequences of the accident. The project had been discussed at a meeting of IAC/RNA and the decision had been taken to include it in the overall activities proposed by the United Nations system in response to the appeal for assistance in connection with Chernobyl. An initial agreement between UNESCO and the USSR had been signed on 1 June 1990 with a view to establishing and implementing a programme of assistance within the fields of competence of UNESCO. The tasks to be carried out under the programme included the preparation of a report in conjunction with the other United Nations agencies concerned and relevant institutions in the USSR to serve as the basis for a conference which could be organized at the end of 1991.

(Mr. Isaksson, UNESCO)

94. A programme had been launched in July 1990 to enable children orphaned by the Chernobyl accident or victims of it to spend their summer holidays in Western Europe. As the Ambassador of the Soviet Union to UNESCO had been reported as saying after the arrival of the first group of children in France, the venture should contribute to the building of a united Europe.

95. In October 1990, the Executive Board of UNESCO had unanimously adopted a resolution on the Chernobyl disaster, in which the Director-General was requested to consider the desirability of including in UNESCO's draft programme and budget for 1992-1993 a special project aimed at developing international co-operation with a view to contributing to the elimination of the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power station, and Member States, international organizations and national and private bodies were urged to continue giving every possible form of encouragement to international co-operation to eliminate the consequences of the disaster. The Director-General had accordingly prepared a UNESCO Chernobyl programme in all the fields of competence of the Organization, comprising activities in a diverse range of disciplines.

96. UNESCO had been deeply touched by the special thanks extended to it by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR for having "reached out so movingly to Chernobyl's children" and was committed to doing exactly that. He assured the delegations of the three countries affected that UNESCO would leave no stone unturned in pursuing its activities in connection with Chernobyl.

97. Mr. RAHMAN (Bangladesh) said that the unanimous adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/236 reflected the importance which the international community attached to concerted measures to reduce the effects of natural calamities and its strong political resolve to realize the goals of the Decade, which were of special significance to countries like his own where natural disasters caused heavy losses in terms of human lives and property.

98. For quite some time the Government of Bangladesh had been engaged in the formulation of national programmes for disaster mitigation, including the establishment of a national disaster prevention council headed by the country's President. The activities of the Council focused on the co-ordination of government plans, programmes and action in connection with natural disaster forecasts, management and relief and post-disaster rehabilitation work. A comprehensive disaster policy, in which stress was laid on disaster preparedness, on the one hand, and relief and rehabilitation, on the other, had been adopted. Other goals were to strengthen local activities, to enhance public awareness and to improve emergency health-care capacities. Such activities were fully reflected in the country's medium-term development plan for the period 1990-1995. Disaster management was a major theme of the fifth UNDP country programme for Bangladesh, and the World Bank's action plan for flood control in Bangladesh, which was currently in implementation, would constitute a giant step towards a lasting solution to the flood problem. Other United Nations programmes and organizations had also been co-operating with the Government in connection with disaster-related operations, as envisaged in the International Framework of Action for the Decade,

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

in which the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system were urged to accord priority to natural disaster preparedness, prevention, relief and short-term recovery. In that connection, he noted that the Secretary-General's report (A/45/621) failed to address the co-ordination of United Nations natural disaster reduction activities. Co-ordination enhanced the efficiency, effectiveness and complimentarity of United Nations programmes, and his delegation believed that it was crucial for the success of the Decade to give consideration to ways of co-ordinating the activities undertaken.

99. His delegation shared the view expressed at the recent joint ACC/CPC meeting that the United Nations capacities for dealing with disasters should be carefully assessed in the light of the objectives of the Decade. The organizational arrangements envisaged in the International Framework of Action were central to the success of the Decade. His delegation had already expressed concern at the lack of progress in instituting those arrangements. It was gratified that the composition of the Scientific and Technical Committee had in the meantime been announced and hoped that the special high-level council called for in the resolution would be established promptly. Member States had intended that the secretariat for the Decade should work in close association with UNDRO, which served as the focal point for disaster-related activities within the United Nations system and had played a major role in the preparatory phase of the Decade. The IDNDR secretariat should make full use of the substantive capabilities within the United Nations system and should report through UNDRO. He hoped the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions would take those views into consideration when it made its recommendations concerning the IDNDR secretariat. Developing countries, particularly those vulnerable to disaster, should be well represented on its staff. His delegation called for voluntary contributions to the activities of the Decade and hoped that the momentum built up in connection with them would not be allowed to decelerate further.

100. Mr. CORNFORD (World Meteorological Organization) said the world's attention should now be focused on the range of problems to be dealt with during the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). Because of the large number of deaths caused by weather-related disasters, WMO felt that it should adopt a leading role in disaster prevention and mitigation and in ensuring that the national meteorological and hydrological services of its members had the capacity to keep extreme weather events from becoming human disasters, and that when they did result in disaster, loss of life, bodily injuries and property damage were kept to a minimum. WMO also wished to ensure that the organizers of rescue, relief and rehabilitation operations were assisted by meteorological and hydrological advice.

101. Those goals could be met by helping Governments to raise the standards of their national meteorological and hydrological services, many of which could still benefit from recent advances in meteorology. Governments would heed meteorological advice received in times of disaster once they had learned in normal times to have confidence in its source. Success also depended upon preparedness and warning systems. While over a thousand deaths from hurricanes had occurred in the United States in each of the first four decades of the twentieth century, in recent

(Mr. Cornford, WMO)

decades, the number of deaths had amounted to only one eighth of the earlier figure as a result of improved forecasting and warning systems and increased public, official and media awareness and co-operation. In other parts of the world, the establishment of tropical cyclone and typhoon committees had also proved to be effective. It was essential that governments and the United Nations system should recognize that although extreme weather events were inevitable, disasters could be minimized. It was one of the few cases where a realistic approach justified the taking of an optimistic attitude.

102. The importance attached by WMO to IDNDR was reflected in the fact that the Organization had made the Decade the theme of its World Meteorological Day in 1990. The Secretary-General of WMO had emphasized the need for an effective but independent collaborative secretariat for the Decade. Although he had expressed some disappointment at the weak impact had by the Decade during its first six months, he had announced that WMO was appointing a second senior officer to the IDNDR team. WMO believed that confidence in and support of the aims of the Decade and appropriate funding for it would help it to succeed.

103. Mr. ROSEN (International Atomic Energy Agency) said that IAEA had been involved in international co-operation to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant since the days immediately following the accident. The Agency's early efforts in that connection had included a visit by the Director-General to the scene of the accident during the month immediately following its occurence, the organization of a post-accident conference, the adoption of a convention on early notification of a nuclear accident and a convention on assistance in the case of a nuclear accident or radiological emergency and the establishment of the Inter-Agency Committee for the Response to Nuclear Accidents (IAC/RNA).

104. The very serious economic, social and political consequences of the accident had been compounded by uncertainty concerning the real health and environmental situation. In response to that uncertainty, IAEA had initiated an intensive, one-year project to examine environmental contamination and human radiation exposure and to evaluate measures to protect the population. An international advisory committee, chaired by the Director of the Radiation Effects Research Foundation at Hiroshima, had been established to direct the project and prepare the final report on it. Membership of that interdisciplinary committee included 19 scientists from 8 countries and 5 international organizations. More than 100 independent experts from 25 countries and 7 international organizations had participated in the field work for the project, which had been carried out during a 6-month period and had involved visits by 40 technical missions to the affected regions. During that time 8,000 individual personal dosimeter readings had been effected, and an additional 4,000 dosimeters were currently being worn by inhabitants of the affected area; 10,000 whole-body measurements had been taken, 2,800 medical examinations had been conducted, 2,000 environmental dose rate measurements had been taken, 1,000 air, soil, grass and food samples had been obtained and 500 square kilometers had been surveyed for radioactive particles. A series of seminars had been conducted, including three-day medical seminars

(Mr. Rosen, IAEA)

attended by 1,200 local doctors, a special seminar on techniques for animal decontamination and four one-day agricultural seminars. A series of two-day conferences for key decision makers had been held in each Republic affected. The project data was currently being evaluated, a summary report of the findings would be presented early in 1991, and IAEA would publish the committee's final report.

105. In May 1990, IAC/RNA had met to discuss the response to numerous requests for assistance in mitigating the effects of the Chernobyl accident and had agreed to work towards the implementation of Chernobyl-related projects. Its co-ordinating role had been underscored by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1990/50. In September 1990 the Committee had met again to discuss the co-ordination of Chernobyl-related projects and had adopted a paper in that connection. At its next meeting it would be briefed on the results of the IAEA project. He suggested that the Committee could assist the Secretary-General by providing a focal point for international efforts, examining project proposals and identifying agencies for project co-ordination.

The meeting rose at 7.10 p.m.